



INSTITUTO
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CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER VALUE CO-CREATION IN THE RUNNING EVENT CONTEXT

Nguyen Bac Nguyen

PhD in Management, specialization in Operations Management, Logistics and
Supply Chain Management

Supervisor:

PhD João Carlos Rosmaninho de Menezes, Associate Professor with Habilitation,
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

December, 2024



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RESUMO

Este projeto baseia-se na *customer-dominant logic* (C-D), enquanto base conceptual determinante, e no contexto de eventos de *running*, para promover a compreensão da natureza multifacetada da formação de valor através da interação cliente-cliente (C2C) (i.e. co-criação de valor C2C) que ocorre em encontros pré, durante e pós-serviço, assim como no dia a dia desses clientes. A investigação também visa esclarecer os diferentes tipos de valor derivados de tais interações sociais e os papéis facilitadores dos fornecedores nos processos de criação de valor inter e multicontextual dos clientes com outros clientes. Baseado numa série de três artigos (um artigo de revisão sistemática da literatura e dois artigos empíricos), a tese aborda sete questões de investigação. Em particular, o Artigo 1 sumariza os desenvolvimentos conceituais da interação C2C, os temas chave de investigação, os *value outcomes* para clientes e fornecedores e uma categorização intersetorial da interação C2C. O Artigo 2 apresenta uma gama de práticas de co-criação de valor C2C que os clientes realizam em múltiplos episódios dentro e fora do consumo de serviços, propõe as ações estratégicas correspondentes que estes adotam e fornece uma estrutura conceptual abrangente que permite distinguir e abordar vários domínios baseados em práticas desses clientes considerando os benefícios relevantes decorrentes por um lado da co-criação de valor C2C na vida do dia-a-dia desses clientes e nos encontros de serviço, bem como, por outro, o envolvimento dos fornecedores nesses processos de co-criação de valor. O Artigo 3 desenvolve um quadro de referência relativo ao *customer-dominante value*; uma hierarquia para esse valor e sugere as estratégias correspondentes ao quadro de referência referido de forma a que os fornecedores possam atender às necessidades e expectativas dos clientes. Este projeto permite uma visão mais compósita da criação de valor, analisando como o interesse compartilhado dos clientes em correr é integrado em seus próprios contextos sociais e como as interações C2C são componentes cruciais da criação de valor, o que amplia o corpo de conhecimento existente sobre a co-criação de valor C2C.

Palavras-chave: cliente-a-cliente, interação C2C, valor, criação de valor, cocriação de valor C2C, lógica dominante do cliente, práticas, estrutura, estratégia, evento desportivo

JEL: M19; M39

ABSTRACT

This project relies on the customer-dominant (C-D) logic and the running event context to advance insights into the multifaceted nature of value formation through customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction (i.e. C2C value co-creation) occurring in pre-, during, and post-service encounters and within customers' lifeworld. The research also aims to uncover the different types of value derived from such social interactions, and the facilitating roles of providers in customers' multi-contextual value creation processes involving other customers. Building on a series of three papers (a systematic literature review article and two empirical articles), the thesis addresses seven research questions. Particularly, Paper 1 summarizes the conceptual developments of C2C interaction, key research themes, value outcomes for customers and providers, and a cross-industry categorization of C2C interaction. Paper 2 uncovers a range of C2C value co-creation practices that customers perform in multiple episodes inside and outside service consumption, proposes the corresponding strategic actions, and provides an extensive framework distinguishing various practice-based domains. By considering the relevant benefits stemming from C2C value co-creation within customers' lifeworld and in service encounters as well as the providers' involvement in such value co-creation processes, Paper 3 develops a customer-dominant framework of value and a hierarchy of value and suggests the strategies corresponding to the derived framework for providers to fulfill customers' needs and expectations. This project enables a more nuanced view of value creation by looking at how customers' shared interest in running is integrated into their own social contexts and how C2C interactions are crucial components of value creation, which extends the existing body of knowledge on C2C value co-creation.

Keywords: customer-to-customer, C2C interaction, value, value creation, C2C value co-creation, customer-dominant logic, practices, framework, strategy, sports event

JEL: M19; M39

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Customers in today's society spend more time connecting with their peers, highlighting the increasing relevance and importance of interactions among customers in shaping their experience and value creation. While existing research stresses the primary role of customers in creating value as well as the significance of their lives outside service consumption, our understanding of customer-to-customer (C2C) value co-creation in such social contexts remains sparse, warranting further research. The thesis, therefore, investigates value co-creation among customers across virtual and physical spaces with a broader time frame, including both within customers' lifeworld and in service encounters. This chapter provides a background to this research project to derive the research objectives. It also provides justifications for the selected context and highlight the research's significance and originality before concluding with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 A background to the research project

1.1.1. The research problem

Customers' experience and value creation are influenced not only by service personnel, service processes, and physical surroundings, but also by fellow customers sharing various service settings (e.g. Fernandes and Krowlikowska, 2023; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018; Yadollahi et al., 2024). Such influence of other customers is generally construed as customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction (Choi and Kim, 2020; Nicholls, 2024; Wei et al., 2022), leading to value co-creation among customers (Cerdan Chiscano, 2024b; Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Saxena et al., 2024). Today's customers spend an increasing amount of time with others who have common mindsets and interests in service consumption or particular life themes (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). Besides, the growing infusion of digital technology in services and society enables the extensive connectivity of customers with their peers beyond the core service contact (Uhrich et al., 2024). Examples include C2C exchanges during service recovery encounters on the service provider's virtual platforms (Bacile et al., 2020), and interactions among members of virtual travel communities operated by online travel agency brands (Xu et al., 2021) or formed by travelers themselves (Johnson and Buhalis, 2023). This underscores the increasing significance of C2C interactions and thus presents novel challenges for service providers in supporting and facilitating C2C value co-creation.

C2C interactions might be direct and explicit (i.e. two or more individuals are aware of and share interactions) or indirect and implicit (i.e. only one individual recognizes relevant interactions with other individuals). These interactions may involve verbal or written exchanges and physical contacts (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022; Uhrich et al., 2024). Such interpersonal encounters range from casual to more intentional forms, including transient and occasional contacts (e.g. customers' observed characteristics in public spaces, Afthinos et al., 2017) to extended and supplementary interactions (e.g. travelers conversed with each other to share new experiences and get support during the travel, Reichenberger, 2017). In certain instance, C2C interactions constitute a core aspect of the service (e.g. collective experiences in music festivals, Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). While C2C interaction is prevalent in many service industries (Colm et al., 2017; Nicholls, 2020), it especially has profound impacts on value creation and further brand or place attachment within shared and collective service environments, wherein interactions among customers are a major part of their experiences (e.g. Huang et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2019). Given the proliferation of such service contexts (Kelleher et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2019), it is imperative to investigate the pivotal role of C2C interaction in value creation (Furrer et al., 2024; Heinonen et al., 2018; Uhrich et al., 2024) rather than primarily focus on value co-creation between customers and other actors (usually service providers) (Carvalho and Alves, 2023; Saxena et al., 2024), thereby delving into this emerging and promising research domain.

In C2C interaction-rich and collective experience-centric service environments (e.g. leisure, tourism, events, and festivals), customers gather together during such service encounters to socialize with strangers they meet (e.g. Wei et al., 2017), spend time with groups or people they know (e.g. Melvin et al., 2020), and interact with other people in a larger collective (e.g. Jahn et al., 2018). In these cases, value creation through C2C interactions takes place within customers' own social contexts beyond the core service offerings (Bianchi, 2019; Cerdan Chiscano, 2024a), and service environments are merely regarded as a platform for value co-creation among customers (Kinnunen et al., 2021; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018). C2C interactions in such service contexts are even more complicated as they involve an ongoing and multi-episode process lasting over time within various physical and digital spaces, and often include multiple physical, virtual, and mental touchpoints with other peers, ranging from encounters between two individuals to interactions of big crowds (Uhrich et al., 2024). Some previous efforts have directly discussed C2C value co-creation, considering customers' life contexts and needs beyond the specific service or facility (e.g. Heinonen, 2022; Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Rihova et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2023); however, the scope of such studies is somewhat confined to either service encounters or online communities. Therefore, more research is worthwhile to understand C2C value co-creation in both virtual and physical spaces with a broader time frame, which

enables an in-depth understanding of customers' everyday lives, the types of relationship they pursue, and their hobbies, activities, and lifestyles.

Customers are becoming the leading and active subjects in value creation within their own contexts to achieve goals and aspirations in life based on what they consider relevant and valuable (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022; Zinelabidine et al., 2018). Customer-dominant (C-D) logic, a recent perspective of service business and marketing, stresses customers' primary role (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2018). This C-D logic lens also views a shared and collective nature of the value formation and broadens customers' activities, practices, and experiences within their own domain, which has provided an enhanced theoretical foundation and has inspired additional studies on value creation through C2C interaction (Heinonen et al., 2018) to advance theoretical understanding and empirical support for the perspective (Anker et al., 2022). In light of the pressing need for further investigation into C2C value co-creation and the managerial challenges faced by service providers, this is the good time to deepen the existing knowledge and widen further research to this stream of literature.

1.1.2. Research gaps

The significant transformations in the business environment have driven different views of customers' roles in their experience and value creation under the evolving marketing paradigms (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2018), which has indeed had a great impact on interests in C2C interaction research from both academics and practitioners (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022). C2C interaction started to draw research attention in the late 1970s with elaborations on service models to stress the interactive nature during service processes going beyond customers' contacts with various elements of the service offering to apprehend the co-presence of fellow customers (i.e. customer B) and their roles in the focal customer's service experience (Eiglier and Langeard, 1977; Grönroos, 1978). Despite such early conceptual contributions, Martin and Pranter's (1989) seminal article was recognized as one of the first attempts to explicitly explore C2C interactions/relationships. Further, the service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2008) pointing to customers as resource integrators to co-create value with other actors and the customer-dominant logic (Heinonen et al., 2010; 2013) putting customers at the center of value creation in their contexts, activities, practices, and experiences, have offered additional theoretical roots for investigations into C2C interaction. While several marketing perspectives have stimulated the considerable development of C2C interaction research, they have resulted in different approaches to operationalize the concept and various understandings of the nature and scope of this studied phenomenon. An exhaustive insight into the conceptual advancements of C2C interaction over time and the key topic domains in this field has not been fully

delineated yet, which leads to fragmentation in the extant literature and thus generates the first research gap addressed within this project.

The second research gap concerns different value outcomes derived from C2C interactions. Previous studies have investigated specific value outcomes of C2C interaction, for example, customers' satisfaction and social well-being (Altinay et al., 2019) and social values such as status and self-esteem (Hyun and Han, 2015), yet these findings seem scattered in the literature. Researchers have also mainly highlighted how C2C interactions are connected to customers' value outcomes, whereas it is quite silent about value outcomes for service providers (Heinonen et al., 2018). Besides, Johnson et al.'s (2019) empirical investigation demonstrated that providers might not always gain from C2C interactions, and the benefits for customers might not be parallel with the positives for providers (Fuschillo and Cova, 2015). Hence, there is an opportunity to develop a classification of positive and negative value outcomes for both providers and customers that provides useful insights into the associated outcomes of interaction among customers for managers and researchers alike.

Third, the importance of C2C interaction in many service contexts has been widely recognized (Pandey and Kumar, 2021), yet the extant research is rather discrete. Prior studies have mostly considered the specific manifestations of C2C interaction within separate service settings such as helping behaviors in the self-service technology environment (Yi and Kim, 2017) and observable characteristics (e.g. age and appearance) in resorts (Temerak, 2019). An overview of various C2C interactions across a variety of services is scant (Nicholls, 2020), and consequently, it is necessary to address this research gap. Developing a categorization of C2C interaction based on an extended range of service industries should provide an exhaustive understanding from a theoretical and practical perspective in identifying, supporting, and facilitating C2C interaction across different service contexts.

A customer-dominant logic highlights not only the primary role of customers in creating value but also the significance of their lives outside service consumption (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). The value formation entails a broader scope than only "use" related to consumption processes (Zinelabidine et al., 2018) since "what happens during the service process is only a part of all related and relevant activities and experiences in a customer's life" (Heinonen et al., 2010, p. 534). Several scholars have made studies of the pre-, during, and post-service experiences (e.g. Antón et al., 2018), yet such research has been quite limited to a specific trip (e.g. Cao et al., 2023) and authors have still discussed value co-creation between customers and providers (e.g. Eletxigerra et al., 2021). Whereas prior research has also considered C2C value co-creation beyond service processes (e.g. Heinonen, 2022; Johnson and Buhalis, 2023; Zadeh et al., 2019), it has specifically focused on exchanges among members in online communities. An understanding of value co-creation among customers in both

physical and virtual environments before, during, and after service encounters, and within their lifeworld has been under-explored to date, creating the next gap to be addressed. Such an investigation is crucial to comprehend the overall experiences of customers and C2C value co-creation in their daily lives extending beyond the confines of a single visit.

The value formation is embedded in customers' lives, practices, activities, and experiences (Heinonen et al., 2013). Helkkula et al. (2012) accounted that the reality of a customer is interconnected to the realities of other actors. Similarly, Grönroos and Voima (2013) noted that actors are involved in each other's practices and thus co-creating value. In this vein, value emerges from the value-creating practices in C2C interactions within customers' own social contexts (Fan et al., 2020). While researchers have made some efforts to explore C2C value co-creation practices during service consumption (e.g. Cerdan Chiscano, 2024a; Rihova et al., 2018), these studies have not adequately taken customers' interrelated activities and practices involving other customers in the context of their lives into account. Furthermore, there have been calls for more research into C2C value co-creation practices in shared and collective service contexts to advance knowledge of this phenomenon (e.g. Nguyen and Menezes, 2021). Thus, there is a need to explore the variety of C2C value co-creation practices for a holistic understanding of an extensive landscape of inter-customer value creation through social practices taking place not only during service encounters but also prior to and subsequent to such encounters, as well as within customers' lifeworlds. This endeavor will facilitate the advancement of both theoretical explanations and practical guidelines for such value creation processes.

Value creation through C2C interaction is potentially complex and relatively unmanageable as it is related to a multi-contextual process including multiple physical, virtual, and mental touchpoints in customers' lives, with a multi-subjective and collective nature ranging from interactions between two individuals to interactive activities of large crowds (Uhrich et al., 2024). Accordingly, value is formed in customers' own life context and their social ecosystem with connections to social communities (e.g. friends, and family) (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). While extant research on C2C value co-creation primarily emphasized benefits for individual customers (Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023), how C2C value co-creation brings benefits to the collectives (e.g. groups, communities, or even society at large) remains under-explored (Nguyen and Menezes, 2021; Uhrich et al., 2024). Further, C2C value co-creation are multifaceted and complicated in nature, yet not many studies empirically explore how service providers get involved in value co-creation among customers (Heinonen et al., 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a customer-dominant framework of value and a hierarchy of value, enhancing insights into the relevant benefits and types of service providers' involvement in C2C value co-creation.

Finally, the recent proliferation of shared and collective services and the advancements in digital technology enhance customers' social connectivity with each other (Kelleher et al., 2019; Uhrich et al., 2024). It raises a vital but challenging task for service providers to step into customers' value creation processes involving other customers in their own social contexts (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2018). There has also been a call for further empirical research on value creation through C2C interactions in reference to the customer-dominant logic approach in order to offer practical implications for service providers (Furrer et al., 2024; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Thus, strategies proposed to make available holistic managerial guidelines are needed so as to support and facilitate value co-creation among customers.

1.1.3. The research context

In order to empirically investigate C2C value co-creation, it is imperative to select a context that features customers' high levels of involvement in social interactions with other peers for an extended period of time. There are numerous mass service settings, customers share their experiences with each other and influence other customers' value creation due to the social nature of consumption (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022), such as shopping malls, leisure attractions, guided tours, festivals, hotels, restaurants and cafes, night clubs and theatres, fitness classes, and sporting and leisure events. C2C interactions are particularly important in contexts where they are key contributors to the overall customer experience (Bianchi, 2019; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018).

Sporting and leisure events represent C2C interaction-rich and collective experience-centric service environments with a strong focus on connections among members of groups (e.g. families, friends, or buddies) and socialization with unacquainted others, which is a crucial motive for attendance (Fernandes and Krowlikowska, 2023; Temerak and Winklhofer, 2023). These events often become a place where attendees with similar interests, motivations, and goals come to interact and enjoy the shared atmosphere (Chen et al., 2021). Attendance at such events is considered an extraordinary and non-routine social occasion set apart from everyday life, in which participants have an opportunity for leisure, special, cultural, and social experiences (Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Scholars have viewed these special events as a part of the services industry, with events studied as a service-delivery occurrence (Kim et al., 2020). Events contain both elements including tangible and static components as well as intangible, variable, and inseparable aspects. Also, these are delivered for a big number of attendees to congregate in a space with great physical proximity, generating a mass service context suitable to study C2C value co-creation. Therefore, running events as a sporting and leisure event type hosted by event organizations selling Bibs (i.e. entrance tickets) for participants were employed as the empirical context in this research project.

These running events also fulfill Martin and Pranter's (1989) criteria for C2C interaction-intense service environments. Attendees are from various demographic backgrounds, and they may visit these events as individuals or members of different groups (e.g. families, friends, or buddies). They may be involved in a variety of socially interactive activities, together with joining the core races. Attendees also come together in such events to share the experience of space, time, and similar interests with each other. Importantly, attendees not only encounter one another during the service process but also connect with other peers outside the event venues across multiple episodes, both online and offline, since such interactions have crucial social implications that go beyond service consumption (Fernandes and Krowlikowska, 2023).

1.2 Research objectives

The primary objectives of this research project are to enhance insights into the stream of C2C interaction research and value creation through C2C interaction as a complex and multi-contextual phenomenon comprising customers' physical, virtual, and mental touchpoints with other customers not only during service processes but also within customers' lifeworld. It also provides an in-depth understanding of outcomes/benefits for the relevant parties and service providers' involvement in such value creation processes, and practical actions and strategies suggested for service providers to be involved in supporting and facilitating C2C value co-creation. These lead to a number of specific research questions:

- RQ1.** a. How has the conceptualization of C2C interaction evolved over time?
b. What are the key themes of C2C interaction research?
- RQ2.** What are the value outcomes for customers and service providers from C2C interaction?
- RQ3.** What are the various types of C2C interaction across a range of services?
- RQ4.** How does C2C value co-creation take place across physical and virtual environments in both service processes and customers' daily lives?
- RQ5.** a. What types of C2C value co-creation practices do customers carry out pre-, during, and post-service encounters and in their lifeworld?
b. What are the various domains of C2C value co-creation practices occurring inside and outside the scope of providers' visibility and direct influential possibility?
- RQ6.** a. What relevant benefits are derived from C2C value co-creation involving multiple episodes within customers' own life contexts and during service consumption?
b. How are service providers involved in C2C value co-creation inside and outside service processes?

RQ7. What actions and strategies could be implemented to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation?

The thesis comprises three papers (a systematic literature review article and two empirical articles) presented in Chapters from 2 to 4. While each paper addresses its own research objectives, they collectively contribute to addressing the overarching research questions outlined above. In the literature review phase, a systematic literature review method was applied. Such an explicit, transparent, and rigorous approach can provide a comprehensive understanding of what has been known about a given topic and foster pragmatic reliability via all-inclusive literature searches that allow replication and update (Rousseau et al., 2008). It was conducted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the C2C interaction literature so as to identify future research directions that require further exploration.

With the evolving perspectives on customers' roles in their experience and value creation within marketing and service research, an increasing number of scholars have adopted non-positivist epistemological lenses in studies of service consumption and related marketing concepts. In the empirical phase of this project, non-positivism mentions paradigms underpinned in the relativist ontology (i.e. reality is relative and constructed in the mind of each individual), such as social constructionism, interpretivism, or post-modernism. Researchers propose that the value formation and value co-creation should be understood as social constructions (Fan et al., 2020; Helkkula et al., 2012; Holmqvist et al., 2020). Edvardsson et al. (2011) posited that value co-creation occurs within wider social systems. Besides, the social construction theory is increasingly suitable to marketing and consumer research (Deighton and Grayson, 1995) as it helps to explain how a shared social consensus between customers and marketers (a more extension, among customers). Due to the complex socio-cultural environment in which C2C value co-creation processes take place (Holttinen, 2010), social constructionism is crucial and is adopted as the epistemological lens for the empirical phase of this project. The social constructionist stance favors qualitative approaches and methodologies that are grounded in the interpretive, instead of the positivist paradigm. Therefore, the empirical study of the thesis employs a multi-method qualitative approach, including participant observations during the events, in-depth interviews with runners, and netnography on Facebook pages of running communities and event organizers, to investigate how C2C value co-creation processes take place in multiple episodes within customers' lifeworld and social experiences during service consumption. The specific objectives of each paper and some relevant findings are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Paper 1: The thirty-year evolution of customer-to-customer interaction research: A systematic literature review and research implications

As customers are increasingly viewed as the head actors in value creation, these changes in perspectives of customers' roles have fostered the growth of C2C interaction literature. Thus, it is pivotal to enhance a holistic understanding of C2C interaction research and to pave the way forward. This paper addressed Research Questions 1a, 1b, 2, and 3 by attempting to explore:

- The distinct stages of development in conceptualizing C2C interaction over time.
- The range of topic domains in the stream of C2C interaction literature.
- The relevant value outcomes derived from C2C interaction for service providers and customers.
- The various C2C interaction types across a range of services.

The results indicated that the C2C interaction conceptualization has progressed from an early awareness of the presence of fellow customers as a subset of the servicescape which may impact the focal customer's service experience to C2C value co-creation processes in which customers interact with other customers in their own social contexts inside and outside service encounters. Additionally, there were eight topic domains studied in the stream of C2C interaction literature (e.g. concept, theory, and framework development; managerial and strategic issues of C2C interaction). The findings also revealed positive outcomes experienced by customers, including emotional, social, functional, and network value, as well as economic and relationship value generated for providers. Some negative outcomes also occurred to providers and customers (e.g. unpleasant encounters among customers leading to unfavorable perceptions and behaviors towards providers, customers feeling embarrassed when receiving help from other customers). Moreover, four ideal types of C2C interaction across a range of services along two dimensions (focus of service experience and interaction orientation) were identified, such as need-specific, standard-specific, affirmation and sympathy, and social connectedness and relationship building C2C interactions. The cross-industry classification of these four types can serve as an orientation for organizational strategies. This paper also concluded with some potential directions for future research.

Paper 2: An extensive framework of customer-to-customer value co-creation practices: A study in a running event context

In order to uncover C2C value co-creation practices in the empirical context of this research project, an extensive investigation of how resource integration activities occurring during interactions among customers ranging from pre-, during to post-running events, and in customers' lifeworld revolving around daily running activities that need to be conducted, as such an inquiry would offer a

whole picture of what customers really do involving their peers during service consumption and in their lives. Thus, the second paper attempts to:

- Explore a range of C2C value co-creation practices that customers perform during and beyond the core service encounter.
- Identify different domains of C2C value co-creation practices inside and outside the scope of providers' visibility and direct influential possibility.
- Provide appropriate types of tactics for service providers to support C2C value co-creation practices.

This paper addressed Research Questions 4, 5a, 5b, and 7. The results suggested a critical overview of three levels of C2C value co-creation practices (individual-, group-, and community-level practices), with each level comprising a number of categories and sub-categories of practices. Generally, there are twenty-five categories (e.g., instrumental assistance, planning, and engaging) and fifty-four sub-categories (e.g., helping, preparing, and consulting) across the three practice levels. The findings also proposed an extensive framework including the four various practice-based circles (blurred area, self-organizing area, open area, and integrated area). Moreover, based on the C2C value co-creation practices identified, this paper offered tactics to facilitate these practices.

Paper 3: Customer-to-customer value co-creation: A customer-dominant framework of value

This paper addressed Research Questions 4, 6a, 6b, and 7 by striving to:

- Identify C2C value co-creation activities that customers undertake inside and outside service consumption.
- Identify relevant benefits stemming from C2C value co-creation activities across multiple episodes within customers' lifeworld and during service encounters.
- Investigate various forms of service providers' involvement in C2C value co-creation activities inside and outside service processes.
- Provide strategic proposals for providers to become embedded in customers' own social contexts to enhance C2C value co-creation.

The results of data analysis revealed eighteen C2C value co-creation activities, through which a two-dimensional model with the horizontal axis representing the benefit orientation of C2C value co-creation and the vertical axis representing the scope of involvement in C2C value co-creation was constructed. The conceptual framework displays the four value formation types (relational focus, participatory focus, private focus, and networking focus), fully delineating various effects of C2C value co-creation activities and the roles that service providers play in such activities. Based on the identified relevant benefits from C2C value co-creation activities, a hierarchy of value was proposed to illustrate

the different levels of benefits. The findings also showed potential outcomes from C2C value co-creation activities for service providers. Furthermore, the four strategic proposals (enhancing strategy, connecting strategy, attaching strategy, and partnering strategy) were suggested, enabling service providers to adopt them to their business to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation.

Table 1.1 A summary of the research objectives

Paper	The specific research objectives	The corresponding research questions
Paper 1	• Comprehend the conceptual advancements of C2C interaction. • Identify the key topic domains in the existing literature on C2C interaction. • Categorize various value outcomes of C2C interactions for service providers and customers. • Classify different manifestations of C2C interaction across a wide range of service industries.	Research Questions 1a, 1b, 2, and 3
Paper 2	• Explore a variety of C2C value co-creation practices occurring during and beyond the core service encounter. • Identify different domains of C2C value co-creation practices inside and outside the scope of providers' visibility and direct influential possibility. • Propose practical actions for service providers to support C2C value co-creation practices.	Research Questions 4, 5a, 5b, and 7
Paper 3	• Identify C2C value co-creation activities performed inside and outside service consumption. • Identify relevant benefits derived from C2C value co-creation activities across multiple episodes within customers' lifeworld and during service encounters. • Investigate various types of service providers' involvement in C2C value co-creation activities inside and outside the service process. • Provide strategic proposals for providers to become embedded in customers' own social contexts to enhance C2C value co-creation.	Research Questions 4, 6a, 6b, and 7

1.3 Significance and originality of the research project

This project has several important theoretical and practical contributions. The first contribution relates to a synthesized overview of the conceptual evolution of C2C interaction. Such insights are essential to comprehend how scholars conceived of and conceptually defined C2C interaction in terms of the nature and range of the phenomenon, its spatial and temporal scope, and the considered value outcomes, hence promoting more research in the area.

Second, although there have been outstanding contributions provided by some notable exceptions of C2C interaction literature review to date (e.g. Harris et al., 2000; Nicholls and Gad Mohsen, 2015), their focuses were limited to certain knowledge gaps at the time of their compilation. Therefore, this project provides a summary of research themes of C2C interaction, which outlines the current state of the knowledge and advances fresh studies in C2C interaction.

Third, prior research on C2C interaction mostly indicates the dispersed findings related to value outcomes for customers, whilst this project provides a categorization of both positive and negative value outcomes and brings forth evidence regarding the scholarly conversations of relatively few value outcomes for service providers (Heinonen et al., 2018). This generates a foundation on which to understand value outcomes for the relevant parties to further boost the impact of effective managerial approaches for service providers and enhances further research on value creation between customers.

Fourth, while it is important to understand various types of C2C interactions across multiple service contexts in order to deal with applications to different service industries, most of the existing C2C interaction research primarily focuses on the specific expressions of C2C interactions in single-industry circumstances (Nicholls, 2020). Thus, by providing a cross-industry categorization of C2C interactions, this project helps advance understanding of different forms of C2C interactions in a systematic manner and allows the development of appropriate practical actions accordingly.

Fifth, this project addresses the drawbacks of previous studies that mainly investigated C2C value co-creation during service processes (e.g. Cerdan Chiscano, 2024b) or through virtual communities (e.g. Johnson and Buhalis, 2023). Based on a C-D lens and a running event context, this project reveals how customers co-create value with other customers across multiple episodes lasting over time within both physical and digital spaces before, during, and after service consumption, and in their daily lives, which provides insights into the multi-contextual value formation from C2C interaction in customers' own social contexts.

Sixth, value creation in the customer domain is an important theoretical part of C-D logic (Heinonen, 2022), yet prior research remains conceptual and does not fully consider the micro-practice of interactive value formation occurring among customers outside service encounters. By

identifying and articulating a range of C2C value co-creation practices in details, some of which are novel, both within and beyond service consumption, this project provides knowledge of how customers' interactive value formation involving other customers actually takes place in practice and the specific meaning of C2C interactions in value creation and creates a foundation for further C2C value co-creation research.

Seventh, drawing on a variety of C2C value co-creation practices identified, an extensive framework is developed. The empirically derived model not only formulates a clear picture of C2C value co-creation practices in four different circles but also extends previous work by illustrating customers' interactive practices involving other customers in new domains that are beyond the line of visibility of service providers. Moreover, the model provides the basis to inform future studies on C2C value co-creation.

Eighth, this project enhances insights into C2C value co-creation outcomes via developing a customer-dominant framework of value and a hierarchy of value. While extant literature mainly considers benefits for individual customers (Heinonen et al., 2018; Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023), the findings indicate that C2C co-creation can bring benefits for groups, communities, and society at large. This project thus contributes to the C-D logic literature on the collective value unit for groups, communities, and society (Heinonen et al., 2013). Besides, this project responds to a call for more marketing and service research that addresses societal issues and brings positive effects on the world (Uhrich et al., 2024).

Next, as little is known about how service providers get involved in value co-creation among customers (Heinonen et al., 2018), the customer-dominant framework of value derived from this project contributes to a clearer understanding of service providers' roles corresponding to the C-D logic perspective by specifying different types of service providers' involvement in C2C value co-creation activities. Furthermore, the framework advances the formulation of future research on C2C value co-creation.

Finally, this project adds empirical insights into C2C value co-creation in running events, which responds to calls for more studies in shared and collective services (Kelleher et al., 2019; Uhrich et al., 2024). Also, it provides service practitioners with managerial guidelines to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation processes, which could be applicable not only to the event and festival industry but also to other socially dense consumption contexts. This aligns with calls for service providers to place C2C value co-creation more centrally within their strategic vision (Furrer et al., 2024; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015).

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis has five chapters, including this introductory chapter. A systematic literature review that helps to enhance an understanding of C2C interaction research and pave the way forward is conducted in Paper 1 (presented in Chapter 2). Two empirical papers, Paper 2 and Paper 3 (presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively) make up the main body of the thesis. Each of these three chapters includes an abstract and introduction, theoretical background, research methods, findings, implications, limitations, and future research directions sections. As each manuscript is prepared in line with the author's guidelines of the relevant publication outlets, each chapter has its own style and structure. The last chapter (Chapter 5) concludes the thesis with a summary and discussion of key findings, implications, limitations, and future research directions stemming from this research project. Chapter 2 was published in *Service Business* (DOI: 10.1007/s11628-021-00446-9), Chapter 3 was published in *Services Marketing Quarterly* (DOI: 10.1080/15332969.2024.2323288), and Chapter 4 was published in the *Journal of Global Marketing* (DOI: 10.1080/08911762.2024.2429094).

CHAPTER 2

THE THIRTY-YEAR EVOLUTION OF CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER INTERACTION RESEARCH: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is the author accepted manuscript of the following paper:

Nguyen, N. B., & Menezes, J. C. (2021). The thirty-year evolution of customer-to-customer interaction research: a systematic literature review and research implications. *Service Business*, 15(3), 391-444.

2.1 Abstract

This paper reviews the past 30 years' worth of extant literature on customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction during on-site encounters. Based on a systematic literature review of 145 empirical and conceptual articles, the advancement of the conceptual underpinnings of C2C interaction through distinct stages and eight key research themes are outlined. The review also identifies different types of positive and negative value outcomes for customers and service providers generated through C2C interactions. A typology of C2C interaction from customers' perspective and the corresponding organizational strategies are also proposed. The review concludes with some managerial implications for C2C interaction-rich service contexts and some directions for future research.

Keywords: customer-to-customer, consumer-to-consumer, C2C interaction, conceptual development, value outcomes, typology

2.2 Introduction

Recent advances in service research suggest customers interact with each other to co-create service experience (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Rihova et al., 2015), highlighting the social and interactive aspects of service experience resulting from customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions. Direct and indirect contacts with fellow customers have been suggested as integral parts of a customer's service consumption due to the social nature of service encounters (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Despite the wide range of circumstances where interactions may occur (e.g. online and on-site settings), on-site C2C interactions have the greatest influence on service delivery and consumption processes (Kim J et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2015) and have direct impacts on customers' immediate service experience (Martin, 2016). A review on on-site C2C interaction can consolidate an integrative perspective of the encounter phenomenon (Colm et al., 2017) and respond to the continued relevance of on-site C2C interaction and challenges faced by researchers and practitioners working in C2C interaction-rich service contexts (Martin, 2016).

In certain C2C interaction-rich service contexts, customers have increasingly active roles in co-creating service experience via purposeful interactions with fellow customers (Pandey & Kumar, 2020). Such interaction and co-creation of experience may not necessarily link to the core service-offerings, posing a managerial challenge for organizations to accommodate such expectations, to facilitate meaningful interactions and to create a unique experience for customers (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Research to date has primarily focused on strategies to minimize negative incidents between customers in service environments characterized by high levels of customer density (e.g. Gursoy et al.,

2017; Martin, 1996; Wu, 2007). However, the greater-than-ever emphasis on interactive and experiential value (e.g. Reichenberger, 2017; Wei et al., 2017b) requires a perspective shift from merely mitigating negative C2C interactions to facilitating superior experience resulting from C2C interactions. This new scholarly and managerial problem creates an opportunity for a fresh review of on-site C2C interactions to comprehend the current understandings of such a phenomenon and to pave the way forward.

Against this background, the present review seeks to broaden the understanding of on-site C2C interaction by addressing the following gaps. First, while there has been extensive research on on-site C2C interactions, those studies have adopted different conceptualizations of C2C interaction, leading to different approaches to operationalize the concept and the boundaries where C2C interactions take place, creating challenges for strategy implementations. For example, the focus of C2C interaction has been shifting from other customers being viewed as a social element of the servicescape (e.g. mere physical presence of Customer B) (Eiglier & Langeard, 1977); to the purposeful exchange of resources (e.g. offerings-related information) (Davies et al., 1999); to a high level of interpersonal interactions among fellow customers (e.g. building relationships) (Huang & Hsu 2009); and to C2C value co-creation (e.g. Rihova et al., 2018). As a comprehensive understanding of the C2C interaction concept is of theoretical and strategic importance, the first objective of the review is *to comprehend the conceptual evolution of C2C interaction over time and the key research topics in this area*.

The second research gap relates to the fragmented findings concerning value outcomes of C2C interactions. While much research attention has been directed towards understanding how C2C interactions lead to different types of value for customers, relatively fewer studies have addressed value outcomes for organizations (Heinonen et al., 2018). Further, empirical evidence suggests that organizations may not always benefit from enhanced C2C relationships and interactions (Fuschillo & Cova, 2015), and positive value outcomes for customers may not always lead to positive value outcomes for organizations (e.g. Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004). The second objective of this article is *to identify the key value outcomes for service organizations and customers generated through C2C interactions* in order to provide insights into the benefits of C2C interaction management and how C2C interactions may result in value creation or destruction for customers and organizations, based on which organization can better inform service management decisions and prioritize organizations' resources accordingly.

Finally, while a systematic understanding of interactions from customers' perspective (e.g. the focus of interactions and customers' expectations) is required as a foundation for customer-centric service designs, the understandings of different manifestations of C2C interaction to date are rather scattered with studies focusing on specific forms of interactions in particular contexts, creating

challenges for cross-context applications. In order to address this gap, this review also seeks to *propose a typology of C2C interaction from the customer's perspective*, based on which organizations can strategically manage controllable resources (facilities, employees, policies, operations and delivery processes) to facilitate different interaction types accordingly.

A systematic literature review (SLR) of 145 conceptual and empirical articles was conducted to answer the general question: How organizations facilitate C2C interactions to achieve positive outcomes in light of the shift of focus of such interactions. This paper contributes to C2C interaction literature in various ways. First, it extends and updates prior selective reviews (e.g. Nicholls, 2010) and offers a structured and up-to-date overview of C2C interaction themes. Second, the review consolidates the conceptual advancement of C2C interactions over time and brings evidence regarding the scholarly conversations of value outcomes for service providers and customers that Heinonen et al. (2018) inspire further understandings. Third, it proposes a typology of C2C interaction from customers' perspective that is strategically relevant, which has important theoretical and managerial implications as to how to support service operations and make managerial decisions. Finally, it facilitates further research on on-site C2C interaction by identifying crucial gaps in the current literature.

2.3 Theoretical background

Customers' service experience has recently been emphasized as a core element of service offerings (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Consequently, creating a superior experience is crucial to organizations' performance, as such experience may lead to customer satisfaction, loyalty, patronage and positive word-of-mouth (Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010), which result in significant financial returns (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Due to the social nature of service consumption, customers cannot avoid service encounters with fellow customers through either direct or indirect contacts (Martin, 1996; Martin & Pranter, 1989). In fact, the social environment, or a number of customers who consume and experience the service while simultaneously socializing, interacting and influencing the experience of each other, is one of the vital precursors of service experience (Verhoef et al., 2009). Thus, it is argued that fellow customers, in addition to service personnel and physical surroundings, have considerable influences on a customer's service experience in most service encounters (Campos et al., 2018; Kandampully et al., 2018), and C2C interactions contribute to service experience and subsequent value creation (Harris et al., 2000; Millán et al., 2016; Pandey & Kumar, 2020).

The influences fellow customers have on the focal customer's experience during service encounters started to receive attention in the late 1970s (e.g. the servuction system model, which highlights the roles of "customer B", developed by Eiglier and Langeard (1977), and the interactive

marketing model proposed by Grönroos (1978)). In their seminal article on C2C interaction, Martin and Pranter (1989) comprehensively investigated a range of customer behaviors that may influence customer satisfaction and retention. Since then, the focus has been expanded beyond the conventional interactions between customers and frontline employees and other servicescape elements to better comprehend the potential impacts C2C interactions have on customers' service experience.

C2C interaction has become a pivotal research stream (Heinonen et al., 2018; Nicholls, 2010) due to its contributions to customers' experience and service providers' business performance (Harris & Baron, 2004; Moore et al., 2005; Hyun & Han, 2015). Customers engage in service exchanges to achieve experiential value in addition to the core functional value (Varshneya & Das, 2017; Wei et al., 2017b), and to develop connections and social relationships in addition to consuming the core service offerings (Huang & Hsu 2009; Rihova et al., 2013). They may seek to enjoyment and excitement during sports events (Uhrich, 2014), pleasantries and relief of service dissatisfaction or discomfort resulting from friendly conversations during waiting time (Harris & Baron, 2004; Davies et al., 1999), opportunities for socialization (Baron et al., 2007), exchanges of credible and valuable advice and information (Harris et al., 1997), a sense of belongingness and connectedness (Huang & Hsu, 2009), and instrumental and social/emotional inter-customer supports (Black et al., 2014). It is important for service firms to accommodate opportunities for enriching customers' service experience via positive C2C interactions (Bianchi, 2019) and engage customers in voluntary behaviors to utilize them as partial employees (Groth, 2005).

Due to such potential influences C2C interactions have on service experience, firms need to be aware of the different forms of C2C interactions (Colm et al., 2017; Moura e Sá & Amorim, 2017). Several forms have been proposed. C2C interactions may be either indirect or direct (Martin 1996; Martin & Pranter, 1989). The former views co-presence of fellow customers simply as one dimension of the social servicescape, and observed characteristics such as customer density and other customers' public behaviors may influence customers' evaluation and attitude towards service firms (Kim & Lee, 2012). Direct C2C interaction, on the other hand, refers to the interpersonal encounters, such as conversations and physical contacts, and is a vital driver of service experience (Wei et al., 2017b). C2C interactions may be occasional and complementary to the service consumption, such as customers exchanging information and advice about the service (Harris & Baron, 2004), or may be a key element of strategic offerings. The latter is particularly true for service contexts such as sports events, cruise trips, conferences and festivals as such contexts primarily involve other customers who come together to share space, meet people with the same interests and motives, and interact for an extended period of time. For example, tourists can engage in intimate conversations with each other to enhance social

relationships and social skills (Arnould & Price, 1993). In fact, customers can experience both occasional and intentional interactions with other customers during service processes (Colm et al., 2017; McGrath & Otnes, 1995).

The impacts of C2C interactions are prevalent across service contexts (Nicholls, 2010; Zhang et al., 2010). For example, conversations between customers in retail environments influence customer satisfaction and value formation extracted from the positive service experience (Davies et al., 1999; Harris et al., 1997). In restaurant settings, other customers' behaviors and attributes (e.g. age, gender, and appearance) influence the focal customer's satisfaction, overall evaluation and behavioral intentions (Huang, 2010; Kim & Lee, 2012). The mechanisms through which C2C interactions influence customer experience and service outcomes have also been investigated in other socially dense environments such as cruise trips (Arnould & Price, 1993; Hyun & Han, 2015), conferences (Gruen et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2017a), sports events/festivals (Kim K et al., 2020), fitness clubs (Bianchi, 2019; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007), transportation (e.g. Harris & Baron, 2004; Go & Kim, 2018), and tourist attractions (e.g. Grove & Fisk, 1997; Parker & Ward, 2000). While customers may interact with other customers to co-create service experience in various contexts, such interactions are particularly prevalent in experiential events (e.g. festivals, sports events, conferences) and services (e.g. tourism, leisure) (e.g. Rihova et al., 2018; Torres et al., 2018).

Customers are regarded as the most important and active actors in service delivery processes (Campos et al., 2018; Heinonen et al., 2010) as they may influence and assemble other customers and eventually influence value creation beyond the customer-provider and customer-environment interactions (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). While it is crucial to effectively manage C2C interactions due to their potential positive or negative effects on a customer's service experience (Kim K et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2010), such interactions are often considered as uncontrollable elements (Moore et al., 2005), creating challenges for organizations (Martin 2016). As C2C interaction is a key source of value creation, it is essential to capture insights into C2C interactions in order to proactively manage resources to facilitate or discourage certain types of C2C interactions that subsequently brings benefits to firms and customers (Grove & Fisk, 1997; Baron et al., 2007).

While C2C interaction research initially focused on face-to-face encounters (e.g. McGrath & Otnes, 1995; Parker & Ward, 2000), recent changes in business and academic environments have provided a catalyst for investigating this phenomenon in customers' domains beyond service providers' controlled boundary, such as in electronic contexts (Adjei et al., 2010; Kulmala et al., 2013). As a result, there are several streams of research on C2C interaction, such as customers' interactions with fellow customers in off-site contexts (e.g. word-of-mouth communication took place post-consumption) (e.g. Libai et al., 2010), in online platforms (e.g. virtual brand communities) (Schau et al., 2009), or in on-

site environments (e.g. face-to-face interactions in physical service settings and word-of-mouth taken place during consumption processes) (Moore et al., 2005; Rahman et al., 2015). The physical settings have distinct characteristics that enrich understandings of certain C2C interaction aspects as opposed to virtual environments (Kilian et al., 2018; Kim & Yi, 2017; Wei et al., 2017a). A variety of on-premise C2C interactions (e.g. either verbal or non-verbal behaviors, and direct or indirect encounters) have received significant research attention to date (e.g. Kim J et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2020a; Nguyen et al., 2020; Temerak, 2019), making on-site C2C interaction a pertinent research stream recently. Thus, the present review focused on on-site C2C interaction.

2.4 Method

The systematic literature review method was applied, as such an explicit, transparent and rigorous approach can comprehend what has been known about a given topic and enhance pragmatic reliability through exhaustive literature searches that allow replication and update (Rousseau et al., 2008). The review process involved a thorough literature search to locate and select the relevant studies, critical appraisal of the individual studies and analysis and synthesis of data, based on which conclusion about the reviewed topic can be drawn (Briner & Denyer, 2012). Such a process is not subjected to biases resulting from a selective or narrative review (e.g. Harris et al., 2000; Nicholls, 2010). Meta-analysis, another commonly used literature review method, was also not appropriate in this case, as such an approach requires the extracted articles to have comparable designs rather than using diverse methodological approaches (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). Further, the key interest of the current review was not to answer a quantitative research question or to test the effect size of the relationships of interest, over which a meta-analysis has certain advantages (e.g. Palmatier et al., 2006). As the main objectives of the current review lie in mapping the conceptual evolution of C2C interaction concept so as to propose a C2C interaction typology that is managerially relevant in driving value outcomes, a systematic literature review was considered appropriate (Pickering & Byrne, 2014).

The current review followed the process suggested by Briner and Denyer (2012), Denyer and Tranfield (2009) and Gabbott (2004), which is discussed next.

Formulating the review questions

The identification of review questions, shaped by the general research question presented above, established the focus of and guides for the review process via setting out the search strategy to locate relevant studies, a set of criteria for articles inclusion and data to be extracted (Counsell, 1997). The following questions were formulated after several rounds of discussion between the authors in response to the identified gaps:

1. How has the conceptualization of C2C interaction evolved over time?

2. What are the key themes of C2C interaction research?
3. What are value outcomes for customers and service providers from C2C interaction?
4. What are the types of C2C interaction from customers' perspective?

Locating sources and relevant studies

The next step involved a selection of electronic databases to ensure it did not limit search results or eliminate relevant studies. The following criteria for opting online sources were considered: covering a broad range of academic journals, containing large repositories of business and management research, ensuring search functions with sufficient accuracy, and providing the retrieved literature across the entire timeframe of the topic. Given these criteria, six databases were selected, including Web of Science, Sage, Emerald, ProQuest, ScienceDirect and Scopus. Two initial pre-set search terms, namely 'customer to customer' and 'consumer to consumer', were used to locate the relevant articles in these databases.

The initial search included all papers with one of these two key phrases in the title, abstract or keywords. While some C2C interaction studies were published as conference proceedings, working papers and book chapters, only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English were included to ensure the quality of the review (Yang et al., 2017). As suggested by prior research, unpublished studies were not included, as this review did not aim to provide a meta-analytic generalization (Laud et al., 2019). Such criteria also helped ensure the quality and inclusion of the most advanced knowledge in the field (Burgess et al., 2006; Moher et al., 2000). No time constraint was imposed on the search.

The search was conducted in November 2020, and 3723 records from 1989 to 2020 were generated. Among them, 330 records were retrieved from Web of Science, while the search on Sage, Emerald, ProQuest, ScienceDirect and Scopus generated 391, 1366, 460, 722, 454 records, respectively. The scanning process detected and eliminated 843 entries due to duplication across databases, leaving 2880 unique entries. Given the scope of the current review, only articles published within the Business and Management category were considered. Subsequently, 2041 qualified records were subjected to the next screening stage.

Selecting studies and appraisal criteria

To ensure the rigor, fidelity, completeness and objectivity of SLR and enhance the study's validity, each paper was independently assessed by reviewers to determine whether they should be included in the analysis and synthesis stage. Careful evaluations of the titles, abstracts and keywords were conducted. If there were doubts about their suitability, the papers would be double-checked by screening the full text. Inevitable personal biases in the evaluating process were mitigated through consensus between reviewers.

To be included, a paper might be either conceptual or empirical article, and employ qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. Review papers were also considered as they offered an overall understanding of the area being reviewed. Title, abstract and keywords of the 2041 remaining entries were initially examined to determine their primary research focus. Included papers should directly focus on C2C interaction and activities performed by customers, and only studies conducted in on-site service settings were examined in depth. A large number of papers (1886 records) were removed at this stage. Particularly, papers mentioning the two key phrases in the title, abstract or keywords but not primarily investigating such concepts were excluded (e.g. Sands et al., 2011). Several studies primarily examining C2C interaction were also excluded as they focus on interactions on online platforms (e.g. Gong et al., 2018). After the screening process, 155 relevant papers were identified, of which the full-text were retrieved and further examined. Among those, 36 papers were justifiably excluded at this stage, resulting in 119 eligible papers. For example, articles focusing on customer engagement (e.g. Braun et al., 2016), addressing marketing approaches, such as relationship marketing (e.g. Elbedweihy et al., 2016) or corporate marketing (e.g. Karaosmanoğlu et al., 2011) were excluded.

As the keyword search approach was likely to result in overlooking key C2C interaction-related studies, checking reference lists of selected papers was considered crucial (Webster & Watson, 2002). Reference sections of the selected papers were screened through a back-tracking procedure (e.g. Le et al., 2019). Consequently, 26 additional papers (e.g. Colm et al., 2017; Hyun & Han, 2015; McGrath & Otnes, 1995) were identified. A total of 145 qualified papers were subjected to the next phase. Figure 2.1 illustrates the rigorous articles selection and appraisal process. All reviewed articles are presented in Appendix 2.1.

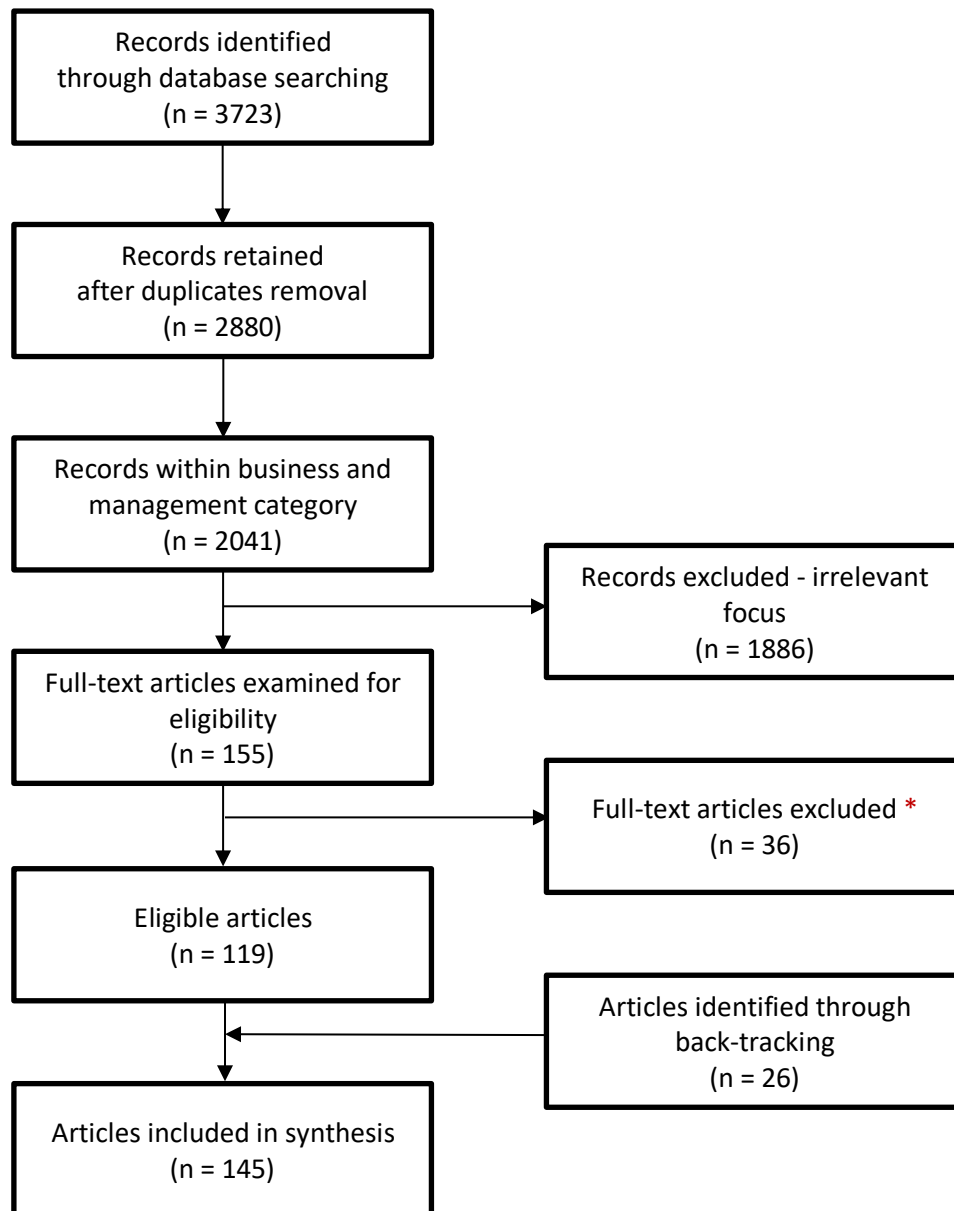


Figure 2.1 Summary of the articles selection process (Adapted from Le et al., 2019)

** Reasons for exclusion: The article's primary focus (number of articles)*

Customer engagement (8); issues on customer group such as group collaboration and influence, in-group and out-group relationships, temporary group formation (6); marketing approaches such as relationship marketing, corporate marketing (5); comparative observation in service encounters (4); community exchange primarily based on social media channels (3); social norms and customers' reactions (3); business/employee-to-customer encounters (2); service environmental design (2); sales performance via C2C interaction management from a firms' perspective (1); customer participation in service production (1); and competition in shopping (1).

Analyzing and synthesizing information

The selected papers were arranged in chronological order from the oldest to the newest for reviewers to be acquainted with, have a sense of the structure and capture the advance of the topic through the years (Gabbott, 2004). The papers were entered into an excel spreadsheet and examined individually. Full-length texts were reviewed and data were extracted for descriptive and thematic analysis. In order to ensure that the important contents were extracted and consistently interpreted by reviewers, a classification system was specified, and comparisons between reviewers' analyses were conducted to reach a consensus.

The extracted information for descriptive analysis included the year of publication, journal title and discipline, type of paper (e.g. conceptual/review, empirical), methodology (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed approach), service settings (e.g. hospitality, tourism, retail), location of study (e.g. European and Asian countries) and the primary focus of research (e.g. antecedents of C2C interaction, value outcomes of C2C interaction). A thematic analysis was conducted to systematically examine and synthesize the contents relating to the review's objectives (i.e. conceptualization, key research themes and value outcomes).

Disseminating the results

After the analysis and synthesis stage, the emerging evidence was organized and summarized to answer the review questions. Descriptive and main results are represented next, based on which research implications are discussed.

2.5 Results and discussion

2.5.1 Descriptive analysis of research papers on C2C interaction

The 145 qualified papers were analyzed descriptively to offer initial insights into research on the topic. The body of literature relevant to C2C interaction dated back to the late 1980s with the seminal paper conducted by Martin and Pranter (1989). Since then, there had been a gradual increase in the number of publications (see Figure 2.2), yet some fluctuations were observed. Not until the late 2000s did we see a steady increase of research interest in C2C interaction, followed by a sharp surge from the early 2010s until 2020. Indeed, 78% of the analyzed papers have been published in the last ten years. Some triggers might contribute to this increase. The first possible explanation is the introduction of additional theoretical roots (e.g. service-dominant logic and customer-dominant logic) for promoting and broadening the scope of C2C interaction research. The second trigger stems from the recognition of the importance of the social nature during service consumption processes in a socially dense service environment in addition to the roles of physical contexts and employees. Specific attention could be

drawn to Nicholls's (2010) paper which proposed new directions and inspired more C2C interaction research. Such growth indicates the increasing importance of the topic and the need to assess this rapidly rising body of knowledge.

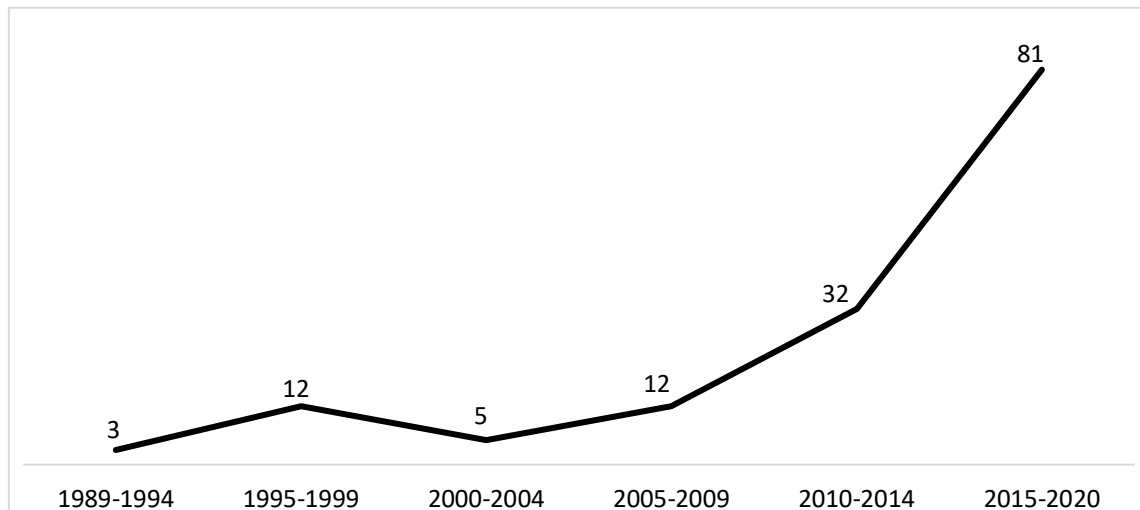


Figure 2.2 The trend of publications

The reviewed articles are published in 51 journals across a range of research fields according to the Association of Business School's (ABS) categorization (see Table 2.1). The quality of papers was ensured as all included papers are listed and categorized in ABS rankings (ratings 1, 2, 3, 4, 4*) or SCIMAGO institution rankings (quartiles 1, 2, 3, 4). The primary research area is tourism and hospitality management with 39% of the eligible papers belonging to this area. Marketing comes as the second most popular field of research, as about one-third of papers falling into this category. This result is consistent with Nicholls's (2010) review which suggests that C2C interaction is one of the key topics of service marketing research. Diverse disciplines such as services, general management, operations management and social sciences constitute the remaining part of publications. This suggests the topic has a wide variety of focused subject areas.

Table 2.1 Research fields and publication outlets

ABS Fields and Publication Outlets	Number of Articles	Journal Ratings
Marketing	47	
Journal of Services Marketing	19	2
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	5	2
European Journal of Marketing	4	3
Psychology & Marketing	4	3
Journal of Retailing	2	4
Journal of Strategic Marketing	2	2
Others	11	1, 2, 4*
Sector Studies	76	
Tourism and Hospitality Management	56	
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	16	3
International Journal of Hospitality Management	8	3
Tourism Management	8	4
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	5	2
International Journal of Tourism Research	4	2
International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	3	1
Journal of Travel Research	3	4
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	2	1
Others	7	1, 2, 3, 4
Services	16	
Journal of Service Management (formerly International Journal of Service Industry Management)	6	2
Journal of Service Research	4	4
Service Business	3	Q1
The Service Industries Journal	3	2
Sport	4	
European Sport Management Quarterly	2	3
Others	2	2, Q2
General Management	9	
Journal of Business Research	7	3
Others	2	1, Q4

Operations Management	9	
Journal of Service Theory and Practice (formerly Managing Service Quality: An International Journal)	5	Q1
Others	4	1, 2
International Business and Area Studies	1	
Organizational Psychology	1	
Public Sector	1	
Social Sciences	1	
Total	145	

Journals published at least two articles are mentioned by name. Journal ratings follow ABS Academic Journal Guide 2018; journals are not listed in this guide are categorized by SCIMAGO Institutions Rankings.

A summary of the examined articles is presented in Table 2.2, including paper type and methodology, research setting, study location and primary research focus. Most of the studies are empirical (88.3%), and 61.0% of the empirical studies adopt a quantitative approach. Qualitative and mixed methodologies constitute 28.1% and 10.9%, respectively. Qualitative studies are based on a wide range of methods, such as critical incident technique, in-depth interview, focus group, case study and participant observation, whereas quantitative studies mainly utilize experiment and survey. C2C interaction is pertinent in socially dense service consumption environments, and research contexts are diverse. The review reveals that research contexts such as hospitality and tourism account for roughly 44% of the empirical studies, followed by the general service environments with 15%. The results of this review are rather consistent with empirical reports provided by Huang (2008) and Zhang et al. (2010) which suggested C2C interactions are most likely to happen in restaurant contexts. Our findings also highlight the emerging role of tourism contexts in which tourists have more opportunities to interact with fellow tourists and experience the service over a longer period (Wu, 2007). Most of the studies were conducted in Western countries, including Europe, America and Oceania (55.5%). The rest focuses on Asian countries such as South Korea, China and Japan (25.0%), African countries (1.6%) or multiple regions (3.9%). About 14% of the studies did not specify the study location. There is a prominent focus on value outcomes of C2C interaction among the empirical papers (57.0%), followed by research on the C2C interaction phenomenon and management (23.4%). While there have been some attempts to uncover C2C interaction antecedents, further research in this area would provide useful insights into service management strategies.

Table 2.2 Categorizations of studies

Criteria	Number of Articles	Percentages (%)
Type of paper and methodological approach	145	100.0%
Conceptual/ Review	17	11.7%
Empirical (Quantitative method)	78	53.8%
Empirical (Qualitative method)	36	24.8%
Empirical (Mixed methods)	14	9.7%
Research setting of empirical paper	128	100.0%
Hospitality (e.g. hotel, restaurant)	33	25.8%
Tourism (e.g. cruise ship, group travel)	23	18.0%
General service environment ^(*)	19	14.8%
Event (e.g. festival, conference)	14	10.9%
Retail (e.g. bookstores, clothing, groceries)	13	10.2%
Leisure (e.g. fitness, dance class)	13	10.2%
Health care	5	3.9%
Self-service technology	4	3.1%
Education	2	1.6%
Transportation service (e.g. train, airplane)	2	1.6%
Study location of empirical paper	128	100.0%
America	34	26.6%
Asia	32	25.0%
Europe	30	23.4%
Oceania	7	5.5%
Africa	2	1.6%
Multiple locations	5	3.9%
No location	18	14.1%
Primary focus of empirical paper	128	100.0%
Antecedents of C2C interaction	7	5.5%
Value outcomes of C2C interaction	73	57.0%
Antecedents and value outcomes of C2C interaction	18	14.1%
C2C interaction phenomenon and management	30	23.4%

() The study is conducted in multiple service settings.*

2.5.2 Conceptualization of C2C interaction

Existing literature offers different perspectives to make sense of and interpret C2C interaction, particularly its conceptualizations and manifestations. Accordingly, researchers have adopted different lenses to capture and comprehend C2C interaction, and the conceptual understandings of such a phenomenon have evolved considerably over time (see Table 2.3). Capturing the nature and scope of C2C interaction is crucial to examine its connections with value creation and govern C2C interaction instances.

The interpersonal encounters taking place between customers in simultaneous service experience and consumption started to receive research attention in the late 1970s, when research on service model started to emphasize the interactive nature of service production and consumption. Such an interactive process goes beyond the interactions between customers and service personnel and other servicescape elements to capture the roles of fellow customers (i.e. customer B) and their impacts on the focal customer's service experience. For example, in the servuction model introduced by Eiglier and Langeard (1977), the simultaneous existence of fellow customers was recognized as an important factor that influences the focal customer's value formation or service perception. Such an important notion has been highlighted since then (e.g. in the interactive marketing model proposed by Grönroos 1978).

After the co-presence of fellow customers during service processes started to gain research attention, such phenomenon and its manifestations were comprehensively studied for the first time by Martin and Pranter (1989). These authors drew attention to the customers' compatible and incompatible behaviors, demographic attributes and other characteristics that positively or negatively influence the service experience of each other. The specific behavior incidents in service processes between customers were also identified (Martin, 1996). It was not until the late 2000s when researchers examined compatible and incompatible attributes of customers and the impacts of such compatibility or incompatibility. Factors such as appearance, number and nationalities (Yagi & Pearce, 2007), cultural conflicts (Iverson, 2010), or other customers' age (Thakor et al., 2008) have been investigated.

Table 2.3 Conceptual advancements of C2C interaction

Conceptual underpinnings	Conceptual Insights	Supporting Studies
Other customers are considered as a merely social element of the servicescape that may affect the focal customer's service experience.	The recognition of <i>Customer B</i> , or the presence of fellow customers, on the focal customer's service experience.	Eiglier and Langeard (1977), Grönroos (1978)
	C2C interaction denotes customers' behaviors, verbal exchange, appearance and demeanor, physical proximity or crowding, and demographic attributes that directly or indirectly affect other customers' service experience.	Iverson (2010), Martin (1996), Martin and Pranter (1989), Thakor et al. (2008), Yagi and Pearce (2007)
Customers influence service experience of each other via contributing a variety of resources and/or verbal or non-verbal behaviors during the service processes.	C2C interaction may include roles assumed by both influencers and recipients of the influence as the dyad interacts with each other.	McGrath and Otnes (1995), Parker and Ward (2000)
	C2C interaction expresses an important form of direct spoken-interaction between customers during the service experience and consumption process.	Baron et al. (1996), Harris and Baron (2004)
	C2C interaction depicts inter-customer support/ assistance throughout service process.	Johnson et al. (2013), Rosenbaum and Massiah (2007)
Customers actively co-create value with others in joint sphere or customer's sphere.	Customers interact with one another in their social contexts and/or outside the service providers' influence domain to experience service and co-create value with others.	Reichenberger (2017), Rihova et al. (2013; 2015), Uhrich (2014),

In addition to customers' behaviors and personal traits which might influence each other's service experience, the conceptual understanding of C2C interaction steadily developed to include the interpersonal influences and roles assumed by both influencers and recipients as well as their manifestations, such as observable oral participation and inter-customer support during service experience and consumption (e.g. Harris & Baron, 2004; Johnson et al., 2013; Parker & Ward, 2000). Customer roles were identified in two broad circumstances, including overt interpersonal influences and covert interpersonal influences (McGrath & Otnes, 1995). The former refers to face-to-face interactions through which two parties conceive the influence of each other. Accordingly, customers may play the role of a help-seeker, reactive or proactive helper, admirer, competitor, or complainer. A covert interpersonal influence refers to the influence in which one actor of the exchange dyad is oblivious to the interaction, corresponding to the roles of a follower, observer, judge, the accused, or spoiler.

Direct verbal interaction between customers was another crucial element of C2C interaction which captures the communications about issues related to products, directions, procedures, or physical assistance (e.g. Baron et al., 1996). Scholars also conceptualized C2C interaction as inter-customer support throughout the service process. Different types of support, such as social-emotional support and instrumental support, were manifestations of such interactions (e.g. Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007).

Another lens to conceptualize C2C interaction was offered by Heinonen et al. (2010) and Grönroos and Voima (2013) to emphasize the customers' sphere. Accordingly, customers interact with one another in their social contexts and/or outside service providers' influence domains to experience the service and cocreate value with each other. In fact, customers' value experience do not always match with service providers' value propositions (Helkkula et al., 2012) which merely serve as a platform for C2C value co-creation (Gummerus, 2013). Thus, rather than solely considering customers as partners in value co-creation processes, service firms should go beyond co-creating activities to aim at fulfilling customers' needs and goals while recognizing that customers experience the service in their own social contexts (Heinonen et al., 2010). Several researchers have reinforced this notion. For example, Uhrich (2014) advances the understandings of C2C value co-creation by identifying where (platforms) and how (practices) customers co-create value with one another in their own sphere. Service providers are then facilitators of customers' on-going C2C value co-creation process (Rihova et al., 2015).

The analysis suggests that the emphasis of C2C interaction conceptualization has gone through distinct stages of development, from the initial recognition of other customers' co-presence which may interfere and influence on the service experience of the focal customer, through customers'

contributions of a wide range of resources and/or verbal or non-verbal behaviors during the service processes that may influence service experience of each other, to C2C value co-creation in which customers actively interact in the joint sphere or customer's sphere before, during and after the core service encounters. This suggests a need for researchers and practitioners working in C2C interactions in socially dense consumption contexts to shift the focus of C2C interaction management accordingly, from how to satisfy customers by mitigating incidents in negative C2C interactions to how to facilitate superior experience resulted from C2C co-creation.

2.5.3 Main topic domains

Table 2.4 illustrates a wide range of topic domains of C2C interaction research, including (1) concept, theory and framework development; (2) managerial and strategic issues of C2C interaction; (3) psychological aspects of C2C interaction; (4) cultural and social aspects of C2C interaction; (5) service failure and recovery related to C2C interaction; (6) influence of customer co-presence; (7) C2C co-creation (dyadic or collective); and (8) triadic customer interaction.

Table 2.4 The key topic domains

Topic Domain	Examples of Investigated Subject Matters	Supporting Studies
1. Concept, theory, and framework development	Customer co-presence influence modes (C2C interaction modes) and testable propositions; inclusion of other customers' co-presence in service model; conceptualization and C2C encounter quality model; identification of direct and indirect C2C interaction; characteristics of C2C interaction intense services; the conceptual framework of C2C co-creation in tourism	Colm et al. (2017), Eiglier and Langeard (1977), Kim et al. (2018), Martin and Pranter (1989), Rihova et al. (2015)
2. Managerial and strategic issues	Service providers' roles in managing C2C interaction; classification of C2C interaction for risk mitigation strategies and value creation from C2C interaction; role adoptions and scripts; compatibility management; typology of C2C value co-creation platforms	Baron et al. (2007), Moura e Sá and Amorim (2017), Parker and Ward (2000), Pranter and Martin (1991), Uhrich (2014)

3. Psychological aspects	Perceived appropriateness toward other customers; customers' embarrassment; emotional responses to behaviors of other customers; mood, expectations, perceived control and perception of incompatibility	Jung and Yoo (2017), Kim and Yi (2017), Miao et al. (2011), Raajpoot and Sharma (2006)
4. Cultural and social issues	C2C encounters in cross-cultural circumstances (cultural conflict, cultural compatibility and intergroup anxiety); social identification; social status and self-esteem	Hyun and Han (2015), Iverson (2010), Johnson et al. (2013), Wei et al. (2017a)
5. Service failure and recovery	The roles and interactions of service actors (human staff/service robot/fellow customer) in the event of service failure incidents; other customers' service failure, recovery expectation, firm's recovery responsibility, and employees' reaction; attributions and outcomes of customer misbehavior; social influences (presence of others and tie strength) and helping others during self-service technology failures	Ho et al. (2020), Huang (2008), Huang et al. (2010), Yi and Kim (2017)
6. Customer co-presence influence	Demographic attributes; physical proximity and crowding; specific behaviors and incidents in C2C interaction; the effect of the displayed emotions of third party customers; number and appearance of other customers	Kim and Lee (2012), Martin (1996), Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2013), Yagi and Pearce (2007)
7. C2C co-creation (dyadic or collective)	Co-creating the collective service experience; the influence of task contribution during group service encounters; C2C value co-creation and co-destruction; the social practices of C2C value co-creation	Carù and Cova (2015), Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser (2011), Kim K et al. (2020), Reichenberger (2017), Rihova et al. (2018)
8. Triadic customer interaction	Customer-employee interactions influencing the relationships between C2C interaction and customers' experience; employee's response to C2C interactions shaping the nature of C2C interactions and subsequent experience;	Lin and Wong (2020); Nicholls and Gad Mohsen (2019)

The first topic domain relates to the concept, theory and framework development of C2C interaction. Several conceptual frameworks were proposed to enhance the understanding and practicality of this concept, such as C2C co-creation framework in tourism (Rihova et al., 2015) or C2C encounter quality model (Kim et al., 2018). The second stream of research addresses how C2C interaction can be effectively managed and strategically planned, which includes compatibility management of encounters (e.g. Pranter & Martin, 1991) or typologies of C2C interaction and the associated strategies for risks mitigation (e.g. Moura e Sá & Amorim, 2017).

As C2C encounters affect customers' thoughts and behaviors towards their peers and service firms, the related psychological aspects and mechanisms have emerged as the third interesting research area. For example, Raajpoot and Sharma (2006) examine the influence of mood, expectations and perceived control on the perception of incompatibility in C2C interaction, and Kim and Yi (2017) investigate the embarrassment customers feel when receiving help from others. As the fourth topic domain, cultural and social issues have also received significant attention. Examples include C2C encounters in cross-cultural circumstances leading to cultural conflicts explored by Iverson (2010), or the influences C2C interaction has on social identification and self-esteem studied by Wei et al. (2017a).

Service failures that occurred during C2C encounters as well as service recovery also attract academic discussion, constituting the fifth research theme. For example, Huang (2008) examines how other customers' misbehaviors influence focal customers' satisfaction with service providers. Yi and Kim (2017) investigate the motivation for inter-customer helping during service failures and the situational factors influencing such helping behaviors. The influence of customer co-presence, as the sixth domain, has also been considerably investigated. For instance, Martin (1996) identifies 32 behaviors other customers may engage in that influence the focal customer during service contacts in public environments. Kim and Lee (2012) examine how the mere presence of other customers in service encounters influences customers' evaluation of restaurant services.

The service-dominant logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2008) and customer-dominant logic offered by Heinonen et al. (2010) have provided additional theoretical roots for promoting C2C interaction research. Consequently, C2C co-creation (either dyadic or collective) has been investigated as another topic domain. Scholars have examined several issues using these lenses, including influences of task contribution during group service encounters (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2011), or social practices of C2C co-creation between customers in the tourism context (Rihova et al., 2018).

In order to further emphasize the interdependency between actors in the service experience co-creation processes, which go beyond the simple dyadic interactions, the last research domain

examining triadic interactions has recently emerged. Such a view highlights the importance of triadic encounters and the need to incorporate the roles of service employees, particularly frontline employees, in examining the C2C interaction phenomenon (e.g. Nicholls & Gad Mohsen, 2019). For example, Lin and Wong (2020) investigate the mechanism through which customer-employee interactions influence the relationships between C2C interaction and customers' experience.

2.5.4 Value outcomes

Table 2.5 illustrates the value that emerged for customers as consequences of C2C interactions during the simultaneous service consumption, as well as C2C interaction-based value being realized by service providers. Examples of value experienced by customers include emotional, social, functional and network value. Outcomes such as economic and relationship value may be generated for providers. While value outcomes for customers and providers could be either positive or negative, studies on positive outcomes are prevalent.

Value outcomes for customers

Emotional value is the first widely studied type of value derived from simultaneous service consumption between customers. Customers may feel satisfied from suitable contacts (Jung and Yoo 2017), friendly conversations (Moore et al., 2005) and helping behaviors (Kim & Yi, 2018). Further, researchers also identify other positive emotions such as fun and enjoyment derived from interactions (Huang and Hsu 2009; Reichenberger 2017) or the excitement generated by rival or opponent interactions during games (Uhrich, 2014).

Interactions with others also generate social value. Engaging in contacts and talks with others offers customers an opportunity for socialization that they may lack in their life circumstances (Harris & Baron, 2004; Parker & Ward, 2000), for the achievement of status, self-esteem and self-image (Hyun & Han 2015; Wei et al., 2017a), and for mutual affirmation, respect and affective attachment (Wei et al., 2017b).

Functional value can also be experienced by customers as a result of C2C interactions. For example, when intimately communicating with other customers, focal customers may improve social skills and broaden the horizons of other cultures and viewpoints, all of which intensify functional value (Arnould & Price, 1993; Reichenberger, 2017). Customers can also experience functional value through receiving credible and valuable advice and information (Harris et al., 1997; Murphy, 2001) or risk reduction in purchase decision (Harris & Baron, 2004; Zhang et al., 2010).

Table 2.5 Value outcomes of C2C interaction

Value Outcomes	Manifestations	Supporting Studies
<i>C2C interaction values for customers</i>		
Emotional value	Satisfaction	Colm et al. (2017), Harris and Baron (2004), Huang and Hsu (2009), Jung and Yoo (2017), Kim and Yi (2018), Martin and Pranter (1989), Moore et al. (2005), Reichenberger (2017), Uhrich (2014), Wu (2007), Zhang et al. (2010)
	Happy feelings	
	Anxiety and dissatisfaction reduction	
	Fun, enjoyment and pleasure	
	Amusement and excitement	
Social value	Social involvement	Harris and Baron (2004), Huang and Hsu (2009), Hyun and Han (2015), Murphy (2001), Parker and Ward (2000), Rihova et al. (2013), Wei et al. (2017a), Wei et al. (2017b)
	Shared consumption experience	
	Status, self-esteem, and self-image	
	Interesting relationships	
	Strengthened rituals, traditions, and identities	
	Mutual affirmation, respect, and affective attachment	
Functional value	Enhanced social skills, knowledge, insights of lifestyles, cultures, other viewpoints	Arnould and Price (1993), Harris and Baron (2004), Harris et al. (1997), Murphy (2001), Parker and Ward (2000), Reichenberger (2017), Wei et al. (2017b), Zhang et al. (2010)
	Uncertainty and risk reduction in purchase decision	
	Credible and valuable advice and information	
	Recommendations, guidance and problem-solving skills	
	Reassurance on suitability, confidence and provoked purchase	

Network value	Close bonds and comradeship Feelings of goodwill from other members, being part of a group Social identity A sense of belonging and connectedness, perceived cohesion Exchanging information and ideas, building sustainable collaborations, collaborative learning, empathetic resonance	Arnould and Price (1993), Huang and Hsu (2009), Rihova et al. (2018), Rihova et al. (2013), Uhrich (2014), Wei et al. (2017b),
Negative value	Anger, frustration, annoyance Privacy intrusion Dissatisfaction Anxiety Embarrassment and irritation Bad advice and wrong information from others	Baker and Kim (2018), Harris and Baron (2004), Huang (2008), Johnson and Grier (2013), Kim and Yi (2017), Parker and Ward (2000), Wu (2007), Zhang et al. (2010),
<i>C2C interaction-based values for providers</i>		
Economic value	Customers as human resources Better brand image Enhanced productivity and re-patronage Willingness to pay premiums Mitigating service failures	Baron et al. (1996), Colm et al. (2017), Harris and Baron (2004), Hyun and Han (2015), van Tonder et al. (2020), Wu (2008), Yi and Kim (2017)
Relationship value	Brand attachment Customer satisfaction Loyalty and positive word-of-mouth Customer voluntary performance	Choi and Kim (2020), Hyun and Han (2015), Jung and Yoo (2017), Moore et al. (2005), Rosenbaum and Massiah (2007)
Negative value	Negative perceptions and behaviors toward firms Lower brand image Losses for firms Risk of switching firms Lower satisfaction	Baker and Kim (2018), Colm et al. (2017), Fuschillo and Cova (2015), Guenzi and Pelloni (2004), Kim and Yi (2017)

Several studies also provide evidence that C2C interactions happen within social networks. Thus, customers also experience network value when being considered as members interacting with each other within a social network (Loane & Webster, 2014). C2C interaction helps participants feel a sense of belonging and connectedness (Rihova et al., 2013; Uhrich, 2014) as, for instance, customers indirectly interact with each other by wearing particular clothes or use typical discourse in their conversations. Through C2C encounters in professional conferences, attendees may exchange information and ideas, build sustainable collaborations, form collaborative learning and facilitate the process of empathetic resonance (Wei et al., 2017b).

In addition to positive value outcomes, researchers also note the types of negative value customers are likely to experience as a result of C2C interactions. Particularly, customers may feel dissatisfied from other customers' failures (Huang, 2008), or embarrassed when receiving help from other customers (Kim & Yi, 2017). Negative feelings such as annoyance, anger and frustration (Baker & Kim, 2018) and anxiety (Johnson & Grier, 2013) may also occur.

Value outcomes for providers

In comparison to value outcomes for customers, scholars have given less focus on C2C interaction-based value outcomes for providers. Facilitating superior experience is a determinant of customer perceived value which creates competitive advantages for organizations (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Some studies on C2C interaction highlight the economic value generated for firms. For example, customers are considered as valuable human resources who make significant oral contributions to other customers' service experience by providing knowledge of products, credible information and honest opinions for others to make purchase decisions (Baron et al., 1996; Wu, 2008). Satisfactory contacts with other customers also make the focal customer more willing to pay a price premium (Hyun & Han, 2015), help mitigate service failure (Yi & Kim, 2017), and enhance organizations' productivity (van Tonder et al., 2020).

Service providers can also cumulate value via better relationships with customers. C2C interaction during simultaneous service consumption also enhances loyalty (Choi & Kim, 2020), positive word-of-mouth (Moore et al., 2005), customer voluntary performance (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007) and brand attachment (Hyun & Han, 2015). These outcomes of interaction eventually enhance the provider-customer relationship that brings long-term advantages to firms.

C2C interaction may not always generate positive value for firms. In fact, negative value outcomes are likely to occur. For example, when customers develop close friendship bonds with each other, a customer may switch service providers if their partner has changing behaviors, increasing risks to the focal firm (Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004). Customers may also help others by handing over tickets at car

parks, public transport, and urban package tours (Fuschillo & Cova, 2015), resulting in losses for firms. In addition, unpleasant contacts may lead to lower satisfaction, lower brand image, and negative perceptions and behaviors towards the firms (Baker & Kim 2018; Colm et al., 2017; Kim & Yi, 2017).

2.5.5 A typology of C2C interaction

The extensive review revealed that while there is considerable research attention on C2C interaction in service settings, the extant literature is fragmented. Most prior studies focused on specific types of interaction in various contexts with different levels of complexity, affecting the mechanisms through which customers might influence the service experience of each other (see Heinonen et al., 2018). As the centrality and implication of C2C interaction for customers' service experience vary across circumstances, it is crucial for service managers to understand the underlying differences so that appropriate interventions could be put in place to support positive interactions or mitigate negative C2C interaction instances.

Categorization of C2C interaction is crucial towards developing a thorough knowledge of its different manifestations. Such an understanding allows service providers to develop effective managerial approaches to get involved in and manage interactions between customers in a systematic manner. A typology, or "conceptually derived interrelated sets of ideal types" (Doty & Glick, 1994, p. 232), can be used to represent unique combinations of attributes. It helps delineate and differentiate dimensions in order to advance knowledge of a phenomenon (MacInnis, 2011). In order to take the first step towards a comprehensive theoretical classification integrating the previously dispersed evidence, a typology of C2C interaction was proposed to separate these ideal types based on two dimensions from customers' perspective, namely *focus of service experience* and *interaction orientation*, which are presented as simple dichotomies (Figure 2.3).

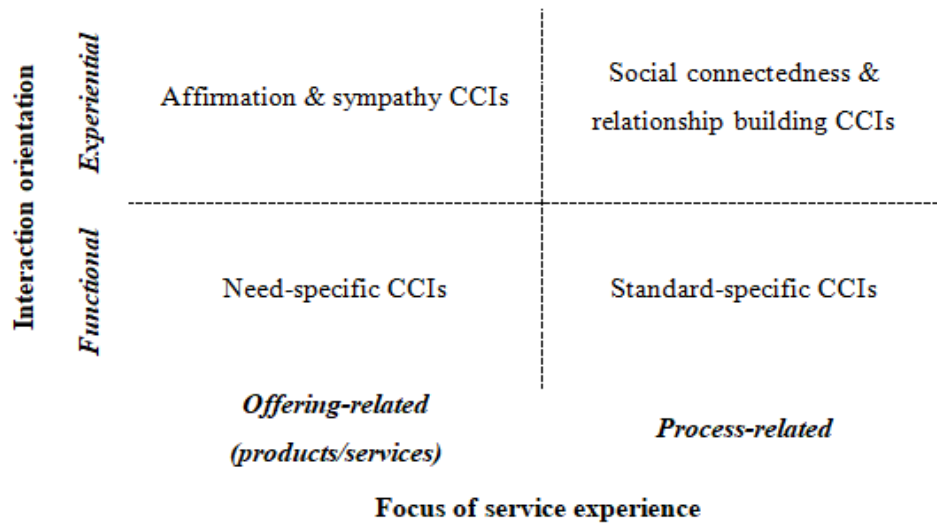


Figure 2.3 A typology of C2C interaction

The first dimension, *focus of service experience*, concerns whether the creation of customers' service experience is primarily stemmed from offering-related or process-related C2C interaction. Offering-related C2C interaction corresponds to circumstances in which customers engage in C2C interaction around the consumption of a particular product or service, or the sharable good (e.g. knowledge and experience) (see Gruen et al., 2007). For example, customers share information and advice about aspects of the service or receive empathy from others about service failures, which improves their service experience (Harris & Baron, 2004). On the other hand, process-related C2C interaction places a high level of importance on shaping the service experience processes, in which C2C interaction may influence the service processes or social connectedness. Examples include customers becoming bothered when other customers do not follow typical service processes or norms (Grove & Fisk, 1997), or social encounters between customers adding to the enjoyment of service processes and building relationships beyond the course of a service setting (Huang & Hsu, 2009).

The second dimension, *interaction orientation*, highlights the encounter intention (i.e. interests and expectations) that customers pursue which might affect their responses to C2C interaction experience. This dimension differentiates between a functional or experiential orientation which has recently been utilized to examine the influence of C2C interaction on the service experience (Lin et al., 2020a; Wei et al., 2017a). While functional orientation triggers C2C interaction that is likely to affect decision making and to achieve resources (Davies et al., 1999) and might disrupt or enhance the functional service processes (Martin, 1996), experiential orientation urges customers towards C2C interactions with an expectation of emotional (happiness, excitement), hedonic (recreation, entertainment) and social benefits (togetherness, status enhancement, social identity, relationships) (Kobia & Liu, 2017).

Figure 3 illustrates four ideal types of C2C interaction in the service delivery and consumption contexts along these two dimensions, including need-specific, standard-specific, affirmation and sympathy, and social connectedness and relationship building C2C interactions. *Need-specific C2C interactions* delineate encounters within which customers expect to achieve functional benefits from offering-related interactions. Typical service contexts in which such interactions are likely to occur are fitness classes and retail stores. For instance, participants in tango classes seek or share information, provide feedback, and contribute resources such as knowledge, time, experience and advice to help improve their service performance (Bianchi, 2019). Along with fulfilling desired benefits from the core product or service, such discretionary behaviors increase the effectiveness of the overall service consumption for customers (Groth, 2005), suggesting service providers might consider customers as a valuable resource in service delivery systems (Baron et al., 1996). Service providers can encourage customers to perform in an appropriate manner during service production and delivery processes by organizational socialization strategies (Kelley et al., 1990), or provide customers with supplementary resources that can be used in C2C interactions. For example, information, guidance and solutions related to a product's or service's consumption can be provided via the providers' controlled online platforms. Experienced customers who are well-equipped with information and knowledge would be more willing to socialize with other novice customers (Parker & Ward, 2000). Regular workout sessions, customer meetings and common events might be appropriate mechanisms for encouraging more customer encounters outside core service settings that may lead to discretionary behaviors between customers while patronizing the service setting, as such approaches help to build customer loyalty and a sense of responsibility for other customers.

The *standard-specific C2C interactions* illustrate customer contacts influencing the functional service process that possibly occur in contexts such as restaurant, hotel, bar, entertaining center and public transportation. Examples of positive interactions include customers bringing comfort to other customers by performing polite and friendly behaviors such as nodding, smiling and greeting (Martin, 1996). On the other hand, customer misbehaviors, such as breaking service rules or norms, using profanity or orally abusing others, and ignoring common sense service procedures or the needs of others can negatively affect the service experience of by-standers (Wu, 2007). As customers are more likely to attribute other customers' misbehaviors to service providers than to disruptive customers (Huang, 2008; Tsang et al., 2016), service providers should understand the manifestations of misbehaviors in order to design effective interventions. Categorizations of customers' disruptive behaviors help service providers detect the roots of these behaviors and effectively respond to them to minimize negative C2C encounters (Gursoy et al., 2017). Compatibility management is another useful avenue in which service providers may foster the likelihood of homogeneous customer mix to

facilitate appropriate exchanges between customers (Martin & Pranter, 1989). For example, sport event organizers may set up separate sections in a stadium for supporters to select desired groups that they expect to affiliate with (Uhrich, 2014), and hotel managers may allocate specific spaces or days for females who prefer different swimsuits (Temerak, 2019).

The *affirmation and sympathy C2C interactions* represent C2C encounters relate to validating or approving each other's self-values or providing social and emotional supports between customers around the consumption of a particular product or service, or the joint concerns. Such interactions may take place in sports events, health clubs and conferences. For example, customers might receive validation or encouragement for gaining achievements and sympathy from other members at health clubs (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007). Attendees' self-esteem can be enhanced by sharing new information and ideas for handling joint challenges, or sympathy may be given to relieve others' negative feelings (Wei et al., 2017b). In these circumstances, managers can support connections between customers to boost their service experience through investing in on-site facilities and utilizing online platforms. For instance, sport event organizers (e.g. marathon events) can set up the finish line in such a way that brings excitement where attendees can congratulate and cheer each other up, or provide photo booths where attendees can take pictures of their records and receive admiration from others, or design recovery areas where attendees can meet and interact with one another to relax and share sympathy and encouragement after finishing the race. Further, provider-operated online platforms can also facilitate exchanges (e.g. customers show off achievements with each other and gain respect and reputation), which might form a sense of temporary companionship leading to on-site C2C interactions (Black et al., 2014). Wei et al. (2017b) also suggest conference organizers invest in both on-site and online facilities due to the crucial role of interactions between attendees inside and outside the main events.

The *social connectedness and relationship building C2C interactions* reflect the encounters between customers in shared consumption processes that help strengthen bonds and social identity. Such interactions are likely to happen in festival, cruise trip and sport event contexts. For instance, tourists might engage in approximate contacts with strangers based on shared attributes (e.g. age or social group composition), which later on might develop into an intensely personal connection if they are sharing their life stories leading to a sense of fun and pleasure (Arnould & Price, 1993; Huang & Hsu, 2009). By spending time on communicating with each other, collaborating together to achieve common goals or sharing experience when attending festivals, relationships of families and friends might be reinforced. Members of a tribal or subculture community enhance a sense of social identity via conducting participatory rituals (Rihova et al., 2018). In order to encourage customers' extensive engagement in these C2C interactions, service providers might consider designing spaces for activities

of community and groups of families and friends, facilitating access to resources (e.g. calling for the display of symbolic objects), and using social media (Rihova et al., 2018). Further, compatibility management of 'calendrical segmentation' and 'party formation' is also an efficient tool (Martin, 2016). For example, sport event organizers might have different schedules for kids, semi-professionals and professionals which not only bring homogenous attendees together but also link those who share similar interests so as to enhance C2C connections. Offering group discounts can also stimulate attendees to bring their acquaintances to events that are expected to enhance attendees' service experience.

Overall, the different types of C2C interactions reflect the complexity and a variety of mechanisms in which customers can influence each other's experiences. While certain types of interactions may be prominent in particular service settings, there are undoubtedly service contexts in which many types of C2C interactions are likely to occur (e.g. sports events, health clubs, conferences, cruise trips and festivals). It is imperative for service providers to understand these different types and the potentially effective interventions to manage them accordingly. Further, the ideal types illustrated in Figure 3 can serve as an orientation for organizational strategies. While *standard-specific CCI*s need to be effectively managed in all socially dense consumption contexts as ineffective management of such circumstances will lead to negative outcomes, organizations also need to facilitate *need-specific CCI*s and *affirmation and sympathy CCI*s as engaging in these interactions can provide customers with opportunities to nurture *social connectedness and relationship building* in the long term. This suggests the centrality of organizations to facilitate C2C interactions to create a unique experience for customers, enhancing customer commitment to organizations.

2.6 Conclusion

The SLR offers valuable insights into on-site C2C interaction research over the last three decades. There has been a significant increase in C2C interaction research, especially in the last five years when approximately half of the reviewed papers were published. Scholars have contributed to a better understanding of this body of knowledge by covering diverse disciplines and reporting research on a variety of academic journals.

As customers are playing more active roles in creating their own service experience, it is crucial for organizations to prioritize resources to foster meaningful C2C interactions that result in C2C value co-creation and unique positive service experience, as long as such interactions do not threaten the functioning of the organization's operations or create risks. This review synthesizes the development of C2C interaction's conceptualization and its manifestations over time in order to highlight managerial implications and create a foundation for future works on C2C value creation. Systematic understandings of the positive and negative of value outcomes customers realize from C2C

interactions help inform C2C interaction management practices to enhance positive outcomes and mitigate negative outcomes for customers. However, as the review reveals, organizations may not always achieve positive outcomes from positive C2C interactions, suggesting the need for further investigations into management practices that ensure positive values for both parties. The C2C interaction typology from customers' perspective provides a comprehensive synthesis of C2C interaction across contexts, based on which managerial implications can be drawn accordingly.

2.6.1 Theoretical contributions

While there have been a few literature review articles on C2C interaction to date, their scopes were limited to certain knowledge gaps at the time of their compilation. For example, Heinonen et al. (2018) predominantly reviewed articles addressing C2C interactions in online platforms to highlight how value is created in the customer domain, which is outside of the domain of service management. As a result, they only focused on value outcomes for customers. Other reviews were limited to a particular type of C2C interaction (e.g. observable oral participation, as in Harris et al., 2000) or a specific aspect of C2C interaction (e.g. customer age-difference, as in Nicholls and Gad Mohsen, 2015). Despite the valuable contributions provided by prior review attempts, the current review adds useful insights to reflect the recent advancement of *on-site* C2C interaction research (e.g. Kim J et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2020a; Nguyen et al., 2020; Rihova et al., 2018) since Nicholls's (2010) thematic review and capture the emphasis on the co-creation of superior on-site service experience.

Theoretically, this review not only adds to the ongoing discussion on on-site C2C interaction but also provides a foundation to advance the understanding of how organizations facilitate C2C interactions to achieve positive outcomes. Particularly, given the shift of focus of C2C interaction management from mitigating negative impacts to achieving superior experience, the review directs managerial attention towards relevant and updated C2C interaction areas that are critical for customer service experience and highlights value outcomes of effective C2C interaction management practices and costs of ignorance or ineffective management. It also offers a typology to delineate and differentiate different dimensions of C2C interactions across different service contexts that are useful for practitioners and researchers alike.

2.6.2 Managerial implications

Some meaningful managerial implications can be drawn from the current review. First, customers can be viewed as valuable human resources in service delivery where they enhance and add value to fellow customers' service experience through interactions. Therefore, it is necessary for service

providers to put effort into understanding the stimuli, manifestations and consequences of C2C interaction as well as adequately capturing customers' expectations in C2C encounters (e.g. functional or experiential orientation) to support positive interactions. Further, as certain C2C interactions result in negative impacts on organizations' reputation (e.g. negative word-of-mouth between customers during- and post-consumption experience, Rahman et al., 2015), further insights into such phenomenon are needed.

Second, governing and handling negative encounters between customers or dysfunctional behaviors are important. Service businesses should understand target customers so as to appropriately design physical environments, operations protocols and managerial and training programs. For example, service firms need to equip frontline employees with coping and problem-solving skills to handle issues between customers. Additionally, customers always attribute controllable or preventable responsibilities to firms when being negatively influenced by other customers' misbehaviors (Huang et al., 2010). However, customers' reactions might be less negative when they perceive employees' efforts to solve the issues (Huang, 2008).

Third, in order to successfully manage C2C interactions in the long term, service providers need to plan for the required resources, including knowledge and skills, change management styles and enhance awareness of C2C interactions in service provisions. As proactive efforts to capture, shape and manage customers' behaviors might significantly demand contact employees' abilities, responsibilities and interpersonal skills, managers should update policies of recruiting, training and empowering their employees. Additionally, service employees' roles should be re-examined and reward systems need to be appropriately adjusted with the new job requirements. In addition to providing the core services, contact employees may be required to undertake extra tasks such as attending C2C interaction management workshops, recording C2C interaction incidents and observations, sharing C2C interaction experience to develop a C2C interaction learning organization, and directly taking part in solving C2C interaction problems. Service firms should also attach managing C2C interactions as an integral part of service delivery systems for all employees to instill this business philosophy.

Finally, a commitment to maintain and continuously improve C2C interaction management is essential. Data from employees and customers should be collected at regular intervals, and qualitative and quantitative metrics can be updated for service providers' own managerial systems. Such regular measurements help evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and managerial programs, identify the needs for changes and improvements to effectively address customers' desires for interactions.

2.6.3 Limitations

While the review offers meaningful insights into C2C interaction research, some limitations should be acknowledged. First, studies on the C2C interaction in virtual environments were excluded. While this phenomenon has started to receive research attention due to technological advancements and the prevalence of social media, the primary focus of the current review was on C2C interaction in the physical settings because of the inherently unique characteristics of such environments.

Second, the choice of electronic databases and key search terms as the initial search filters might limit the number of retrieved papers. Some papers may use expressions rather than 'customer to customer' or 'consumer to consumer' to examine C2C interaction, or not be covered in the chosen databases. However, the results show that we seemly achieve a wide spectrum of journals and disciplines. Further, carefully screening the reference sections of selected papers helps reduce the possibility of completely overlooking significant papers.

Finally, in order to ensure quality of the reviewed papers, this review did not include books, book chapters, PhD dissertations, conference proceedings, grey literature and articles written in languages other than English. Although the authors' conscientious efforts have been directed to rigorously follow the guidelines, a degree of subjectivity exists due to the authors' understandings of the papers. Thus, conducting an SLR with quantitatively analytic techniques such as citation analysis can contribute additional useful insights.

2.6.4 Future research

Several issues identified in this review need to be considered in future research. This review demonstrates the dominance of C2C interaction research in Western countries, indicating a considerable unbalance of research distributions among regions and suggesting the need for further investigation in other cultural contexts or developing countries (e.g. Asian areas). The cultural variations (e.g. individualistic or collectivistic community) may reveal differences in customers' behaviors and perceptions of C2C interaction (Levy, 2010). Besides, there is a need to conduct more cross-cultural comparisons, which help global enterprises serving customers from different cultures understand and manage C2C interactions more effectively. Some interesting questions remain relatively unexplored: How does C2C interaction in Asian countries differ from C2C interaction in Western countries? What are the specific features of C2C interaction in collectivistic cultures? What types of situations are more prevalent in C2C interaction in collectivistic cultures? As Asian customers tend to get involved in more C2C interactions within a pre-formed group (i.e. acquaintances) in public

environments, does the existence of such C2C interactions impact other customers outside the group? How does it influence?

The results also show the prominence of investigation of value outcomes of C2C interaction, whereas further empirical attention to its antecedents is warranted. Some drivers of C2C interaction have been uncovered, such as appearance, age, gender, nationality and crowdedness (e.g. Kim & Lee, 2012; Yagi & Pearce, 2007). Subsequent research could examine the effects of personal factors such as motivations and goals on C2C interaction. Further insights into provider-specific antecedents can also help organizations create, stimulate and manage different types of C2C interactions, particularly in the socially dense service consumption environments. For example, further research may explore how individual characteristics influence customers' desire for engaging in/ avoiding C2C interactions? What role does an individual's psychology play in outcomes of C2C interaction? How do service designs facilitate C2C interactions?

The main methodology adopted in C2C interaction research is an empirical quantitative approach and cross-sectional data are mainly collected to test relationships between the constructs of interest. The focus on the key links at one point in time may result in limitations of interpreting the dynamic and ever-changing relationships as well as drawing conclusions about the causal relationships among the study variables (Jung et al., 2017). Longitudinal studies can provide a deeper understanding of the bonds created between customers during extended encounters over time (e.g. vacation).

Most of C2C interaction research has concentrated on the perception and evaluation of C2C interaction from the customers' perspective. Whilst there is evidence in the C2C interaction literature revealing the role of service personnel in promoting positive interactions (e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Levy, 2010) and handling negative interactions (e.g. Baker & Kim, 2018; Huang, 2008), service employees' perspectives of C2C interaction have received little attention (Nicholls & Gad Mohsen, 2019). Consequently, investigating service personnel's perspectives can offer deeper insights into their perception of such interactions. Particularly, what are the required capabilities to effectively deal with various types of C2C interactions? How can service firms provide employees with adequate support and training to enhance positive interactions? How negative C2C related issues (e.g. stress resulted from involvement in negative C2C interactions) can be mitigated?

The review also suggests studies on positive value outcomes are dominant. In fact, customers and service firms may suffer from value co-destruction. Fuschillo and Cova's (2015) study on C2C helping behaviors illustrates that while passing on tickets in public places may enhance a fellow customer's service experience, such behaviors influence the market and service providers negatively. Thus, integrative studies considering how positive and negative value outcomes for customers and service providers are derived from C2C interactions might provide worthwhile insights. Future research may

also explore: How may C2C interactions result in value co-destruction? How can service providers take proactive actions to detect and prevent possible negative effects?

C2C interaction research to date mainly recognized fellow customers as a social element of the servicescape that influences the focal customer's service experience and value formation, and few studies have explicitly explored C2C co-creation processes via interaction in the socially dense service environment (e.g. Baron & Harris, 2008; Uhrich, 2014). Further, whilst most of the previous interaction research highlights personal value outcomes, few studies address value co-creation via C2C interaction at the collective level (i.e. customers participate jointly in collective activities to pursue shared goals). Particularly, value co-creation may take place between multiple customers who co-present and coordinate with one another during the consumption process. Examples of collective value co-creation to foster group experience include customers doing their parts to achieve common interests and goals in rafting and indoor soccer group experiences (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2011), a group of team sport supporters wearing the team's clothes to reinforce their social identity (Uhrich, 2014), and participants gathering at the finish line after completing their marathon race to wait and cheer up their peers. Future research should further investigate C2C co-creation processes via interactions to identify value outcomes at both personal and collective levels. For instance, how do customers coordinate to create value in collective consumption contexts? Which C2C interaction practices may lead to collective value co-creation? Which collective values can be stemmed from such interaction behaviors?

The prolific advances in technology and digitalization signify a new industrial transformation, Industry 4.0, enabled by a bundle of technologies (e.g. autonomous robots, sensors, mobile and wearable technology, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence) (Calabrese et al., 2020) have created tremendous opportunities for businesses. Besides the pervasive applications of digital technologies in manufacturing areas (e.g. Bokrantz et al., 2020), their crucial roles in enhancing customers' service experience are also evident (e.g. Bolton et al., 2018; Neuhofer et al., 2012). For example, Wei et al. (2017a) propose that event organizers can employ technological tools such as wireless devices and mobile computing to facilitate interactions between conference attendees. Such use of technology can also be easily observed in today's life. For example, the Alegro shopping center or the NOS alive music festival in Portugal usually provides platforms (e.g. interactive murals, video panels) where customers or attendees can interact with others while experiencing the service or event. Further, Wei (2019) also notes that virtual reality and augmented reality applications influence customers' emotions, experiences, behaviors and activities, and the potentials for C2C interactions and co-design of experience. However, the review indicates that the roles technology plays in C2C on-site interactions have not received sufficient attention. Consequently, on-site C2C interaction and the

roles of technological applications and devices are promising opportunities for future research. Potential research questions include: What are specific features of on-site C2C interaction assisted by technological applications? How do service firms redesign towards adopting new organizational forms fitting with the business models of other firms within the ecosystem? How can service firms utilize evolving technological trends to facilitate on-site C2C interactions? For example, as big data help connect and interpret customers' information to create new business opportunities and offer new solutions (Kohtamaki et al., 2020), how can big data be utilized to better understand and manage on-site C2C interactions? What are the barriers to applying digital technologies to support on-site C2C interactions? As people may not always accept and adopt new technological applications, such as wearable Internet of Things devices (Papa et al., 2020), investigating how customers perceive the role of digital technology in coordinating on-site C2C interactions can provide insightful implications.

2.7 Appendix 1: Details of the included articles

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
1	Martin & Pranter (1989)	Journal of Services Marketing	Conceptual & Empirical	General service environments	US	Literature review, observation audit, interview, focus group	Content analysis
2	Pranter & Martin (1991)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	General service environments	US	Literature review, observation audit, interview, focus group	Content analysis
3	Arnould & Price (1993)	Journal of Consumer Research	Empirical	Cruise trip	US	Multiple methods (e.g. survey, observation, focus group, interview)	
4	Harris et al. (1995)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Retail	UK	Survey	CHAID analysis
5	Jones (1995)	Management Research News	Conceptual				
6	Martin (1995)	Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics	Empirical				Scale development
7	McGrath & Otnes (1995)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Retail	US	Observation, interview, shopping with informants	
8	Rowley (1995)	Library Review	Conceptual	Libraries			
9	Baron et al. (1996)	European Journal of Marketing	Empirical	Retail	UK	Interview	Content analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
10	Martin (1996)	Journal of Consumer Affairs	Empirical	Restaurant, Bowling Center	US	Critical incident technique, survey	PCA, ANOVA
11	Rowley (1996)	International Journal of Educational Management	Conceptual	Higher education			
12	Grove & Fisk (1997)	Journal of Retailing	Empirical	Tourism	US	Critical incident technique	
13	Harris et al. (1997)	International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research	Empirical	Retail	UK	Experiment	ANOVA
14	Davies et al. (1999)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Retail	UK, Australia	Survey	CHAID analysis
15	Harris et al. (1999)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Retail	UK	Survey	Mixed approach
16	Harris et al. (2000)	Journal of Marketing Management	Review				
17	Parker & Ward (2000)	European Journal of Marketing	Empirical	Garden Centre	UK	Survey, in-depth interview	Content analysis
18	Murphy (2001)	Annals of Tourism Research	Empirical	Hotel	Australia	Interview	Content analysis
19	Guenzi & Pelloni (2004)	International Journal of Service Industry Management	Empirical	Fitness Centre	Italy	Survey	Regression analysis
20	Harris & Baron (2004)	Journal of Service Research	Empirical	Travel	UK	Interview, observation	Ethnographic content analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
21	Moore et al. (2005)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Hair salons	US	Survey	Regression analysis
22	Raajpoot & Sharma (2006)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Restaurant	No location	Scenario-based experiment	Factorial analysis of variance
23	Baron et al. (2007)	Service Business	Empirical	Speed-dating	UK	Introspective account, in-depth interview, observation	Ethnographic content analysis
24	Gruen et al. (2007)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Empirical	Professional association meeting	US	Survey	Moderated regression and path analysis
25	Rosenbaum & Massiah (2007)	Journal of Service Research	Empirical	Gym club	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
26	Wu (2007)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Tourism	Taiwan	Survey	Regression analysis
27	Yagi & Pearce (2007)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Empirical	Tourism	Australia	Survey	Cross-tabulation
28	Huang (2008)	International Journal of Service Industry Management	Empirical	General service environments	Taiwan	Retrospective experience sampling, survey	Content analysis, structural equation modeling
29	Thakor et al. (2008)	Journal of Retailing	Empirical	General service environments	Canada	Experiment	ANOVA
30	Wu (2008)	The Service Industries Journal	Empirical	Tourism	Taiwan	Survey	Regression analysis
31	Huang & Hsu (2009)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	Empirical	Cruise trip	North America	Interview, focus group	Content analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
32	Zourrig & Chebat (2009)	International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences	Conceptual				
33	Huang & Hsu (2010)	Journal of Travel Research	Empirical	Cruise trip	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
34	Huang (2010)	Journal of Service Management	Empirical	Restaurant	Taiwan	Scenario-based experiment	MANCOVA
35	Huang et al. (2010)	Journal of Business and Psychology	Empirical	Restaurant	Taiwan	Scenario-based experiment	MANOVA
36	Iverson (2010)	International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	Empirical	Tourism	Indonesia	Open-ended questionnaire	Content analysis
37	Levy (2010)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Tourism	Western vs. Asian countries	Field experiment	Analysis of variance, bivariate t-tests
38	Nicholls (2010)	Journal of Services Marketing	Review				
39	Tombs & McColl-Kennedy (2010)	Australasian Marketing Journal	Empirical	Café	Australia	Field observation, focus group	Thematic analysis
40	Zhang et al. (2010)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	General service environments	US	Critical incident technique	Thematic analysis
41	Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser (2011)	Journal of Strategic Marketing	Empirical	Sport	New Zealand	Survey	Structural equation modeling

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
42	Levy et al. (2011)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	Empirical	Tourism	North America	Field experiment	Independent samples t-test, ANOVA, ANCOVA
43	Miao et al. (2011)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	No location	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, multiple regression analysis
44	Nicholls (2011)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Conceptual				
45	Söderlund (2011)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Empirical	General service environments	No location	Scenario-based experiment	MANOVA
46	Brack & Benkenstein (2012)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Empirical	General service environments	Germany	Survey	Multidimensional scaling, ANOVA
47	Kim & Lee (2012)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Restaurant	Italy	Interviews, scenario-based experiment	ANCOVA
48	Papathanassis (2012)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Cruise trip	Germany	Interview	Content analysis
49	Yoo et al. (2012)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Hospital	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
50	Choi & Kim (2013)	Managing Service Quality: An International Journal	Empirical	Hospital	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
51	Johnson & Grier (2013)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Nightclub	South Africa	Scenario-based experiment	MANCOVA, ANCOVA

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
52	Johnson et al. (2013)	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Empirical	Biker rally	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
53	Miao & Mattila (2013)	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	ANCOVA, MANCOVA
54	Rihova et al. (2013)	Journal of Service Management	Conceptual				
55	Tombs & McColl-Kennedy (2013)	Psychology & Marketing	Empirical	Restaurant, café, club	Australia	Experiment	ANOVA, MANCOVA
56	Yi et al. (2013)	Psychology & Marketing	Empirical	Retail	South Korea	Interview, survey, laboratory experiment	Content analysis, structural equation modeling
57	Amorim et al. (2014)	Organizacija	Empirical	Educational and science services	No location	Focus group	
58	Black et al. (2014)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Health club	No location	Survey, secondary data	Structural equation modeling
59	Brack & Benkenstein (2014)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Seminar	No location	Scenario-based experiment	MANOVA
60	Curth et al. (2014)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Health club	Germany	Survey, scenario-based experiment	Structural equation modeling, ANOVA, MANOVA
61	Huang & Wang (2014)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	Taiwan	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, ANCOVA
62	Miao (2014a)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, regression analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
63	Miao (2014b)	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment, survey	MANOVA, regression analysis
64	Uhrich (2014)	European Sport Management Quarterly	Empirical	Sport	Germany, England	Interview, observation, netnography	Content analysis
65	Carù & Cova (2015)	Journal of Service Management	Conceptual				
66	Ekpo et al. (2015)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Conference	US	Introspection, netnography	Thematic analysis
67	Fuschillo & Cova (2015)	Journal of Consumer Behaviour	Empirical	General service environments	Europe	Interview	Hermeneutic analysis
68	Hwang & Han (2015)	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	Empirical	Golf club	US	Survey	Regression analysis, ANOVA
69	Hyun & Han (2015)	Journal of Travel Research	Empirical	Cruise ship	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
70	Luck & Benkenstein (2015)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Empirical	Retail	Western	Experiment	Structural equation modeling
71	Nicholls & Gad Mohsen (2015)	Journal of Services Marketing	Review				
72	Rahman et al. (2015)	Journal of Strategic Marketing	Empirical	General service environments	No location	Critical incident technique, survey	Structural equation modeling
73	Rihova et al. (2015)	International Journal of Tourism Research	Conceptual				

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
74	Torres (2015)	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	Empirical	Tourism	Europe	Observation, interview	Grounded theory
75	Choi & Mattila (2016)	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Empirical	Restaurant	No location	Experiment	ANCOVA
76	Dorsey et al. (2016)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Empirical	Retail	US	Critical incident technique	
77	Kim & Choi (2016)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Retailer, entertainment	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
78	Luther et al. (2016)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Empirical	Hospital	No location	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, multiple mediation
79	Martin (2016)	Journal of Services Marketing	Conceptual				
80	Millán et al. (2016)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Cruise ship	Europe	Survey	Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis
81	Torres (2016)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Tourism	Greek	Ethnography	Domain, taxonomic and theme analysis
82	Tsang et al. (2016)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	Empirical	Theme park	Hong Kong	Survey	Structural equation modeling
83	Yang (2016)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	Empirical	Tourism	Macau	Survey	Structural equation modeling
84	Yin & Poon (2016)	International Journal of Contemporary	Empirical	Tourism	China	Critical incident technique	

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
		Hospitality Management					
85	Afthinos et al. (2017)	Managing Sport and Leisure	Empirical	Tourism	Greece	Survey	Structural equation modeling
86	Becker & Pizzutti (2017)	Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	Empirical	Retail	No location	Experiment	PROCESS analysis
87	Colm et al. (2017)	Journal of Service Research	Conceptual & Empirical	Retail	Italy	Interview	Content analysis
88	Gursoy et al. (2017)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	General service environments	No location	Netnography	Content analysis
89	Jung & Yoo (2017)	Service Business	Empirical	Leisure class	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
90	Jung et al. (2017)	Journal of Service Research	Empirical	Health/fitness class	South Korea	Survey	Regression analysis
91	Kim & Yi (2017)	Journal of Service Management	Empirical	Self-service technology	No location	Critical incident technique Experiment	Mediation and moderation analyses
92	Moura e Sá & Amorim (2017)	Total Quality Management & Business Excellence	Conceptual				
93	Reichenberger (2017)	International Journal of Tourism Research	Empirical	Tourism	New Zealand	Interview	Content analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
94	Rummelhagen & Benkenstein (2017)	European Journal of Marketing	Empirical	Restaurant	Germany	Scenario-based experiment	t-tests, mediation analyses
95	Sengupta & Pillai (2017)	International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	Empirical	Hotel	India	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA
96	Sengupta & Sreejesh (2017)	Journal of Indian Business Research	Empirical	Fine-dining restaurant, department store	No location	Scenario-based experiment	MANOVA
97	Tomazelli et al. (2017)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Retail	Brazil	Interview, focus group	Content analysis
98	Wei et al. (2017a)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Conference	No location	Survey	Structural equation modeling
99	Wei et al. (2017b)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Conference, event	US	Interview	Content analysis
100	Yi & Kim (2017)	Service Business	Empirical	Self-service technology	No location	Scenario-based experiment	Confirmatory factor analysis, PROCESS
101	Baker & Kim (2018)	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	Empirical	General service environments	US	Critical incident technique	Content analysis
102	Cai et al. (2018)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	Regression analysis, mediation analysis
103	Go & Kim (2018)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Air travel	South Korea	Focus group, survey	Content analysis, Kano

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
104	Heinonen et al. (2018)	Journal of Service Theory and Practice	Review				
105	Ji et al. (2018)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	China	Survey	Hierarchical linear modeling
106	Kilian et al. (2018)	Psychology & Marketing	Empirical	General service environments	Germany	Interview	Content analysis
107	Kim & Yi (2018)	The Service Industries Journal	Empirical	Retail	No location	Scenario-based experiment	PROCESS
108	Kim et al. (2018)	Psychology & Marketing	Empirical	General service environments	South Korea	Critical incident technique, survey	Structural equation modeling
109	Koenig-Lewis et al. (2018)	European Sport Management Quarterly	Empirical	Sports event	UK	Survey	Structural equations modeling, Regression-based PROCESS analysis
110	Line et al. (2018)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	Empirical	Tourism	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
111	Malone et al. (2018)	Journal of Travel Research	Empirical	Tourism	No location	Interview	Thematic analysis
112	Matson-Barkat & Robert-Demontrond (2018)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Restaurant	UK	Interview	Thematic analysis
113	Meshram & O'Cass (2018)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Senior citizen clubs	Australia	Focus group, Survey	Content analysis, structural equation modeling

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
114	Rihova et al. (2018)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Festival	UK	Interview, observation	Thematic analysis
115	Song et al. (2018)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	Hong Kong	Survey	Structural equation modeling
116	Sreejesh et al. (2018)	Journal of Service Theory and Practice	Empirical	Hotel restaurants	India	Survey	Regression-based PROCESS analysis
117	Altinay et al. (2019)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Coffee shop	UK	Survey	Structural equation modeling
118	Bianchi (2019)	Leisure Studies	Empirical	Dance class	Chile	Interview	Content analysis
119	Erkmen & Hancer (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	Turkey	Survey	Structural equation modeling
120	Hwang & Lee (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
121	Joe & Choi (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	ANCOVA

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
122	Johnson et al. (2019)	European Journal of Marketing	Empirical	Healthcare	India	Survey	Regression-based PROCESS analysis
123	Kim et al. (2019)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Golf Association events	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
124	Kim & Baker (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, mediation analysis
125	Line & Hanks (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Hotel	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
126	Luo et al. (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Theme park resort	China	Survey	Structural equation modeling
127	Moura e Sá & Cunha (2019)	TQM Journal	Empirical	Swimming pool	Portugal	Survey	Structural equation modeling
128	Nicholls & Gad Mohsen (2019)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Library	UK	Focus group, interview	Thematic analysis
129	Rihova et al. (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Festival	UK	Interview, observation	Thematic analysis

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
130	Temerak (2019)	Tourism Management	Empirical	Resort	Egypt	Interview, scenario-based experiment	MANCOVA
131	Casais & Sousa (2020)	Tourism Management Perspectives	Empirical	Tourism	Portugal	Ethnographic participation	
132	Choi & Kim (2020)	Journal of Service Theory and Practice	Empirical	Theme park, public transportation	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
133	Ho et al. (2020)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Self-service technology	US	Experiment	ANCOVA, Regression-based PROCESS analysis
134	Kim J. et al. (2020)	Journal of Services Marketing	Empirical	Healthcare	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
135	Kim K. et al. (2020)	The Service Industries Journal	Empirical	Professional golf tournament	South Korea	Survey	Structural equation modeling
136	Lin & Wong (2020)	Journal of Vacation Marketing	Empirical	Casino	Macau	Survey	Structural equation modeling
137	Lin et al. (2020a)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling
138	Lin et al. (2020b)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Survey	Structural equation modeling

No.	Author (Year)	Journal	Type of Study	Research Setting	Study Location	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Techniques
139	Nguyen et al. (2020)	Journal of Business Research	Empirical	Restaurant	US	Scenario-based experiment	ANOVA, Regression-based PROCESS analysis
140	Nicholls (2020)	Journal of Service Theory and Practice	Empirical	General service environments	Poland	Critical incident technique	Thematic analysis
141	Pandey & Kumar (2020)	Qualitative Market Research	Empirical	General service environments	India	Interview	Soft ladderling technique
142	Reichenberger & Smith (2020)	Tourist Studies	Conceptual				
143	Tran et al. (2020)	International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	Empirical	Café	Vietnam	Survey	Structural equation modeling
144	van Tonder et al. (2020)	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management	Empirical	Self-service technology	South Africa, Australia	Survey	Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling
145	Wood & Kinnunen (2020)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Empirical	Festival	UK, Finland	Open-ended questionnaire	Thematic analysis

CHAPTER 3

AN EXTENSIVE FRAMEWORK OF CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER VALUE CO-CREATION PRACTICES: A STUDY IN A RUNNING EVENT CONTEXT

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3.1 Abstract

This study investigates customer-to-customer value co-creation practices by adopting a customer-dominant logic. Data were gathered through observations of 5 running events in Vietnam, interviews with 17 runners, and netnography. Fifty-four micro-practices at the individual-, group-, and community-level were identified, and an extensive framework differentiating four distinct practice-based circles (blurred, self-organizing, open, and integrated areas) was formed to delineate the entire phenomenon. By enriching the understanding of customer-to-customer value co-creation within the broader context of customers' lifeworld, the study lays foundations to advance this stream of research and offers insights for providers to step into and support customer-to-customer value co-creation processes.

Keywords: customer-to-customer co-creation, customer-dominant logic, practices, value co-creation, sports event

3.2 Introduction

In contemporary societies, people devote more time to pursue their interests, activities, hobbies, lifestyles, and associated interpersonal relationships that give their lives purpose (Filo et al., 2022; Zinelabidine et al., 2018). People are increasingly interacting with others who have similar mindsets and interests through service consumption activities or particular life themes (Bianchi, 2019; Heinonen, 2022). Examples of this include visiting socially dense service environments to gather, socialize, and share experiences with one another (Wood and Kinnunen, 2020), or engaging in collective interactions on online platforms (Xue et al., 2021). The expansion of mass services and advancements in information and communication technology can better facilitate social connectivity (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2018; Zhang et al., 2023). As a result, customers now have more opportunities to associate and share consumption experiences and mutual interests with other customers (Fan et al., 2020; Johnson and Buhalis, 2023; Zhang et al., 2019). In these situations, understanding how customers actively contribute to value creation, especially how they interact with one another within the customer domain, has important practical implications (Heinonen, 2022).

In mass services and high-involvement settings (such as leisure, tourism, and events), customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions are prevalent and central to the service experience and value creation (Fernandes and Krolikowska, 2023; Kandampully et al., 2018). Such interactions among customers could be either verbally-centered or physically centered (Uhrich et al., 2023). They could also be both direct and explicit (i.e. both customers interact with each other) or implicit (i.e. only one customer is

aware that they are engaging in an interaction) (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022). Customers may view mass services and high-involvement contexts as a space for social interactions and collective activities with other customers (friends, family, and strangers), as opposed to concentrating only on the core experiences of provider-created elements (Kinnunen et al., 2021; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018). The value of such social encounters among customers is indeed not directly linked to providers' service processes; instead, it is formed from the processes of C2C value co-creation (Saxena et al., 2023). Moreover, C2C value co-creation not only takes place within the confines of the service processes but rather emerges from all interactive activities between customer-customer dyad or customer collectives before and after service consumption (Bacile et al., 2020; Holmqvist et al., 2020), as well as relationships among customers in their lifeworld (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022).

A review of the extant literature has identified an important research gap relates to the understanding of various C2C value co-creation practices that go beyond the boundaries of a single visit to the service and include practices in customers' daily lives. In fact, the co-creation literature primarily emphasizes the value co-creation processes between providers and customers (Pandey and Kumar, 2020), with other customers being viewed as a subset of the service process (Erkmen and Hancer, 2019; Saxena et al., 2023; Tran et al., 2020). Although there have been some attempts to address value co-creation between customers as well as customer collectives, the majority of research on C2C value co-creation appears to be limited to either during service processes (e.g. Cerdan Chiscano and Darcy, 2021; Kim et al., 2020) or on virtual communities (e.g. Zadeh et al., 2019). Only a few studies acknowledge the importance of pre-, during, and post-service experiences (Antón et al., 2018); however, the investigation is still confined within the boundaries of a specific visit (Carvalho et al., 2023) and places a strong emphasis on the co-creation of value between the provider and the customer (Eletxiggera et al., 2021). Thus, there is still room to look further into customers' everyday lives and realities to gain an in-depth understanding of customers' ongoing interactive activities and experiences with other like-minded customers in the context of their lives, which is not bounded in a single service consumption instance (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). As "what happens during the service process is only a part of all related and relevant activities and experiences in a customer's life" (Heinonen et al., 2010, p. 534), a holistic view of various dyadic and collective interactions among customers to co-create value is managerially important. Such an understanding would enable service providers to develop practical actions to get involved in and support the independently orchestrated and interrelated activities that customers are likely to engage in during C2C value co-creation (Furrer et al., 2023).

Against the aforementioned backdrop, this qualitative study seeks to identify the particular C2C value co-creation practices that customers engage in prior to, during, and after service consumption

as well as in their daily lives, and then develop an extensive framework of C2C co-creation practices to delineate the entire phenomenon. Consistent with Frow et al. (2016), Helkkula et al. (2012), and McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012), this study refers to C2C value co-creation practices as resource-integration activities during interactions among customers within a specific social context. The study adopts a customer-dominant (C-D) logic as a useful lens to gain insights into C2C value co-creation (Heinonen et al., 2018; Nguyen and Menezes, 2021). This perspective highlights the customers' central role as the most important source of value creation (Kuuru, 2022). It also emphasizes the temporal and spatial aspects outside specific service consumption in which activities, practices, and experiences evolve (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). Value creation, as a result, occurs in a collective and inter-subjective context in customers' lifeworld (Rihova et al., 2015). The necessity of conducting this investigation is further highlighted by the call for additional research to advance theoretical understanding and empirical support for the C-D logic lens (Anker et al., 2022).

Running events were chosen as the empirical context as they enable an investigation of C2C value co-creation practices both within the confines of a specific trip and in customers' everyday life. Social practices represent a promising foundation for value creation among customers (Kelleher et al., 2019), especially in events and leisure industries (Fernandes and Krolikowska, 2023). A review of the literature found little empirical evidence for C2C value co-creation in running event contexts, especially in Asian countries (Nguyen & Menezes, 2021). Given the recent proliferation of such shared and collective consumption contexts, C2C value co-creation research in such a context is theoretically and practically important (Luna-Cortés, 2017; Zhang et al., 2019; Uhrich et al., 2023).

This study makes some important contributions to services marketing literature. The study first addresses the shortcomings of previous research that primarily examined C2C value co-creation during a specific service visit (Carvalho et al., 2023) or within providers' servicescapes (Pandey and Kumar, 2020). The findings reveal how customers co-create value with each other in the broader context of customers' lifeworld. By identifying and articulating a number of C2C value co-creation practices that are either not yet codified or have been discussed but differ in a number of ways and empirically deriving an extensive framework, the study creates a foundation for further C2C value co-creation research (Nguyen and Menezes, 2021). Second, while value creation in the customer domain is an important conceptual part of C-D logic (Heinonen, 2022), previous studies are mostly conceptual in nature and do not take into consideration the micro-practices of customers outside of service encounters. For this reason, prior research is inadequate in theoretically explaining customers' value creation and practically guiding supports for customers' value creation. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the C-D logic lens in service research by revealing a range of C2C value co-creation practices in customers' lifeworld (Anker et al., 2022). Such insights are important for service

providers to get involved in the C2C value co-creation processes and provide appropriate types of support (Furrer et al., 2023), leading to greater value outcomes for customers. Finally, it adds empirical insights into the C2C value co-creation in sports event contexts, particularly in running events.

3.3 Literature review

3.3.1 Customer-dominant logic

Service research has observed paradigm shifts from provider-based to service interaction-centric to customer-focused views of value creation (Zeithaml et al., 2020). C-D logic is seen as a new perspective on the roles of service providers and their customers in creating value, in which customers' value creation and their own life contexts are positioned at the center of interest (Heinonen et al., 2010). This view states that instead of involving customers in the service process, providers should attempt to understand activities, practices, experiences, and contexts in customers' lifeworld to accomplish their own goals (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). As customers know what they want and expect, they are active in seeking out experiences that may fulfill their needs, rather than only direct contact points during the service process (Zinelabidine et al., 2018). Value may originate in personal experiences and customers' interactions with other actors in their daily lives and ecosystem (i.e. both individually and socially constructed) (Helkkula et al., 2012; Kuuru, 2022); thus, C-D logic urges service providers to seek out novel approaches and adopt fresh perspectives on their roles in customers' lives (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Specifically, providers are encouraged to learn what practices and experiences customers are involved in within their own social contexts, to prioritize customer-related aspects rather than provider-defined elements, and to play a facilitating role by offering customers adequate platforms for value creation (Heinonen et al., 2013; Zinelabidine et al., 2018).

A C-D logic has been applied to understand value creation (Heinonen, 2022), customer engagement (Heinonen, 2018), customer experience (Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022), service recovery (Cheung and To, 2016), and C2C interactions (Zhang et al., 2019), across several empirical contexts, such as leisure activities (Cerdan Chiscano, 2023), online communities (Heinonen et al., 2019), yoga training (Kuuru, 2022), healthcare (Seppänen et al., 2017), and tourism (Fan et al., 2023). Some research adopted an experiential approach with a primary focus on personal and subjective aspects. For example, Kuuru (2022) investigated the roles of embodied knowledge in customer experience. Malone et al. (2018) investigated how intra-subjectively felt emotions of a customer affect the subjective and idiosyncratic value creation. The collective and inter-subjective dimension was also considered. For instance, Fan et al. (2020) explored how tourists interact with other people in their social network (e.g. families, friends, colleagues, service providers, and even strangers) via online

platforms during their travel to co-create value, and Lipkin and Heinonen (2022) characterized how ecosystem actors combine to drive a focal customer's service experience.

Given the objective of the current research, a C-D logic approach is deemed appropriate as it emphasizes the collective and shared nature of value as a key premise of C2C value co-creation (Heinonen et al., 2018). It also highlights the significance of value creation within practices and experiences positioned in and shaped by customers' lifeworld, not limited to visible interactions in a specific service (Heinonen et al., 2013). As C-D logic scrutinizes customers' lives and other related activities and practices as a whole (Heinonen et al., 2010), such a lens allows us to expand the temporal and spatial scope of our investigation to develop a framework encompassing practices pre-, during, and post-consumption experiences, as well as the different social contexts in which they evolve.

The next discussion refers to the literature on social practices before introducing C2C value co-creation – research and domains.

3.3.2 Social practices

The C-D logic provides an enhanced theoretical foundation for the research of value formation from customers' co-creation practices in their own social contexts (Fan et al., 2020). Practices are defined as "routinized ways in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Practices are enacted within a social context, in which doings and sayings are organized around shared practical understanding (Schatzki, 1996). The view of practices as a context-laden arena for value creation (Holttinen, 2010) is appropriate for this exploratory study as the focus is on how value is created from a certain practice within customers' lifeworld. Helkkula et al. (2012) illustrated practices as resource-integration activities that lead to value creation. Also, value co-creation practices represent actors engaging collaboratively in activities via interactions within a specific context (Frow et al., 2016; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). Accordingly, C2C value co-creation practices in this study are described as resource-integration activities occurring during interactions among customers within a specific social context.

The social practice lens has been adopted in previous studies. Holt (1995) was among the first attempts to use a practice-based approach to investigate consumption practices in a baseball spectatorship setting. The author demonstrates how individual customers derive subjective value through their interactions with a range of consumption objects and develops a typology of consumption practices. Another stream of research focuses on interactions between customers and providers (Lamers and Pashkevich, 2018). Heinonen et al. (2010) and Helkkula et al. (2012) argue that value formation in customers' own life contexts and practices entails a broader scope than only "use"

related to consumption activities or concrete interactions with the service. Some researchers have expanded value co-creation practices to include customers' interactions with other actors in addition to providers (Kelleher et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2022).

Few attempts have been made to directly depict how value is created from C2C value co-creation practices (Rihova et al., 2018), especially beyond the service encounter (Zadeh et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023). Consumers are part of a more socially connected world where they interact with one another to pursue common interests or a way of life that centers around consuming the provider's services (Johnson and Buhalis, 2023). Thus, in addition to social relationships among customers in service settings, insights into C2C value co-creation practices in their daily lives, before and after service encounters, are essential because these practices can affect customers' service consumption (Heinonen, 2022). However, such practices remain under-explored.

3.3.3 C2C value co-creation – research and domains

Interactions between different actors form the basis of value co-creation (Carvalho and Alves, 2023; John and Supramaniam, 2024). Value co-creation is typically described as an interactive process between the customer and the service provider. In that sense, customers are considered active value co-creators who realize value from integrating resources through using and interacting with the provider's offerings (Pham et al., 2022). While academic discussions of value co-creation have expanded to other actors in the provider's service networks (Landry and Furrer, 2023), there has been minimal effort to explicitly address value co-creation between customers and customer collectives (Pandey and Kumar, 2021; Luo et al., 2019).

The importance of C2C value co-creation within customers' own social contexts has also been evident in some studies adopting the C-D logic approach. For example, in the context of independent online channels, Heinonen (2022) explored the ex situ value derived at the individual and collective level, outside the on-site experiences and customer-provider interactions. C2C value co-creation during the service consumption process was investigated in tourism and recreation contexts such as how C2C value co-creation results in various value outcomes (Rihova et al., 2018) and influences repatronizing intention (Zhang et al., 2019). Some other C2C value co-creation research adopted other theoretical lenses such as service-dominant logic, consumer culture theory, and practice theory (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Bhanja and Saxena, 2022; Holttinen, 2010). Carù and Cova (2015) explored the co-creation of collective service experience among customers in leisure industries. Luo et al. (2019) investigated how C2C value co-creation and co-destruction affect the focal tourist's perception of service quality and brand loyalty. While these studies help to understand how various organizational practices can support effective resource integration among customers, the primary

focus was on C2C value co-creation within the narrow boundaries of the service encounters or in virtual communities, leaving customers' reality and everyday life largely unaddressed. Thus, the scope of implications is rather constrained. As a result, it becomes imperative to look into C2C value co-creation both within the confines of a specific trip and in the context of customers' daily lives in light of their overall experiences.

Grönroos and Voima (2013) illuminated three conceptual domains of value creation, including the provider sphere, joint sphere, and consumer sphere. This study investigates value formation from C2C value co-creation practices both within the confines of a specific trip and in customers' everyday life, thus focusing on the joint and customer spheres. The joint sphere is where customers come into physical and digital contact with service providers to co-create value with other customers. In that sense, customers play a key role in customer-driven activities to mobilize resources (Holmqvist et al., 2020; Nicholls, 2020). Given that these activities and processes are visible to providers, it may be possible to facilitate customers' immediate service experience by offering support and flexibility in service provisions. The customer sphere, on the other hand, is mostly independent of and invisible to providers. Customers' activities in the customer sphere involve assembling resources, planning, reflecting on the experience, and engaging in other social interactions. These activities collectively shape their future behaviors and service experiences (Zinelabidine et al., 2018).

In short, the current study adopts a C-D lens in the context of running events to address the following question: What are C2C value co-creation practices, or resource-integration activities occurring during interactions among customers, that customers may engage in prior to, during, and after service consumption, as well as in their lifeworld?

3.4 Methods

Running events are rich collective service contexts for C2C interactions. Events create a fruitful opportunity to connect people (Richard, 2015), i.e. fostering interpersonal bonding by strengthening existing structures and network connections (Filo et al., 2022). Attendees of these events can build relationships with other people (e.g. family members, friends, coworkers), or even those they have never met before (Temerak and Winklhofer, 2021). Scholars have viewed these events as a part of the services industry (Kim et al., 2020). Events contain tangible and static components as well as intangible, variable, and inseparable aspects of service. Also, these are delivered for a large number of participants to gather in a place with great physical proximity, creating a mass service context relevant to investigate C2C value co-creation. Running events not only facilitate social interactions at event venues but also lead to broader exchanges among people with a similar mindset in a way of life revolving around the provider's service consumption or within a service-based community (Luna-

Cortés, 2017; Sato et al., 2016). Therefore, running events hosted by event organizations selling Bibs (i.e. entrance tickets) for attendants were employed as the empirical context.

A multi-method qualitative approach was used, including participant observations during running events, in-depth interviews with runners, and netnography on the Facebook pages of running communities and event organizers. Such an approach is appropriate for the exploratory and interpretative nature of the study (Gephart, 2004) and has been used in prior co-creation research to obtain specific information about behaviors, experiences, and social contexts (Kelleher et al., 2019; Tynan et al., 2014). The fact that we used a range of methods (observation, interviews, and netnography) and data sources help triangulate findings to increase the validity (Bluhm et al., 2011).

As of 2023, there are about 50 marathons or half-marathon races in Vietnam annually, not including smaller events. These are not only popular sporting events that provide an opportunity to enhance health benefits and interpersonal connections, but they can also generate significant economic benefits for local communities and the tourism sector. A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted to investigate rich cases of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Consequently, five running events that were hosted by organizers that sold bibs, or entry tickets, to participants were selected. The five running events were reflected by the following pseudonyms: FunRun, MovementRun, TrailRun, LocalRun, and InterRun. Table 3.1 offers more details about these events, including the focus of events, target attendees, their scale, date, and place, as well as the distance of the races.

One of the authors attended the events as a runner and immersed himself in these events from June 2019 to January 2021. The researcher focused on observing and taking notes of sorts and patterns of visible behaviors and interactions, actors engaged in and material artifacts used in those activities and features of spatial and temporal settings as well as executed social rules and norms to identify what participants actually do to co-create value with each other during the event.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the events, with a purposive sampling scheme. Interviewees were those attending at least one of the five events and engaging in discussion on running groups/communities and events' Facebook pages. Interviews were carried out until data saturation is reached. There were seventeen interviews (50-90 minutes), and informants were diverse in terms of gender, age groups, occupations, backgrounds, the number of running event visits, and social group (e.g. individual, family, friend group, and running club). Pseudonyms were used for individual informants (ID01, [...], ID17).

Interviewees were asked about direct and indirect interpersonal activities they experienced in the most recent event. We aimed to depict interactive situations with examples and stories to obtain rich insights into particular social interactions and collective activities, motivations, resources used, and explanations of implicit or explicit norms in those interactive activities. These insights help illuminate

the field notes on interactions among attendees during the event. In order to understand how the virtual and physical spaces became interconnected in runners' lives, interviewees were also encouraged to discuss their social connections with other runners both before and after the event, outside of the event venue.

Table 3.1 Running events

	FunRun	MovementRun	TrailRun	LocalRun	InterRun
Type and focus of events	An entertainment event with culinary stands and music performances	A running event for charity fund raising / spreading a message	A running event to discover and conquer wild and natural terrains	A running event to experience beautiful landscapes and race tracks	A internationally certificated running event with professional sport & entertaining exhibition
Target attendees	Young attendees and families	Individuals, families, and groups	Mature attendees, semi-professionals	Individuals, families, and groups	Mature attendees, semi-professionals, and professionals
Event scale	Approximately 10,000 participants	Up to 15,000 participants	Approximately 4,500 participants	Approximately 7,000 participants	Approximately 10,000 participants
Time and location	One day; an urban venue in HoChiMinh City	Half a day; an urban venue in HoChiMinh City	Three days; highland location in the South of Vietnam	Half a day; an urban venue in HoChiMinh City	One day; an urban venue in HoChiMinh City
Distance of races	5KM	5KM	10KM, 21KM, 42KM, and 70KM	5KM, 10KM, and 21KM	5KM, 10KM, 21KM, and 42KM

Additional data was gathered from online community discussions about pre- and post-event interactions, such as pre-event planning and preparation, post-event sharing, and common C2C co-creation activities of individual runners and communities in their daily lives. Following Kozinets's (2015) method of observing users' online behaviors and exchanges, the collected data were limited to archival and elicited data and avoidance of interference in the online discussions was ensured. The online platforms observed in this study included five Facebook pages for the studied events and four Facebook pages operated by the running communities.

Observation notes and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, which were coded by one author and a colleague who are fluent in both Vietnamese and English. The two researchers worked closely together on a daily basis in the coding process to resolve disagreements and confirm interpretations, hence reducing researcher-induced biases. Another author played a devil's advocate role and reviewed the rationality and logic of the coding process. The data were collected in Vietnamese and translated into English only in the final step to avoid distortions of meanings (Suh et al., 2009).

The analysis and interpretative process followed a theoretical thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006), and the emerging themes were developed following a constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researchers first read the observation notes and interview transcripts multiple times to become immersed in the data and note down some preliminary ideas (e.g. C2C value co-creation practices could be in the form of interactions amongst individuals, members of the same group taking part in activities within their own group, or a large group of community members taking part in activities together). After that, the complete data set was coded, and the data were assigned to the appropriate code. Next, similar codes were systematically collated into distinct but coherent sub-categories/ sub-themes to reflect the evolving meanings and interpretations (Gioia et al., 2013). For example, it becomes apparent during fieldwork observations and interviews that runners performed certain meaningful activities together, such as accompanying another member to finish the remaining distance in the race and handing over a group's flag to another member to carry to the finish line. We grouped these codes under the "greeting" sub-category. Those potential sub-categories/ sub-themes were then reviewed to check if they work in relation to codes, and were subsequently collated into categories/ themes. For example, 'collecting', 'hunting', and 'relating' sub-categories were grouped into the 'assembling resources' category. The back-and-forth iteration between theoretical and empirical insights resulted in a refining of codes and the generation of abstract higher-level themes (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). The codes and categories are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Categories and codes in thematic analysis

Categories	Sub-categories	Codes
Actor units	Self- and dyadic participation	• Indirect interactions with other participants • Direct interactions with other participants
	Group participation	• Friends • Members of families • Members of companies • Members of running clubs/tribes
	Community participation	• The crowd of participants in the event • A collective of participants in the running communities
Assembling resources	Collecting	• Information search • Communication for information
	Hunting	• Seek Bibs • Exchange merchandise and accessories
	Relating	• Invite peers to attend the event • Tag names
Other-oriented performance	Observing	• Pay attention to other customers' conversations • Look at other customers' behaviors
	Attaching	• Perceive behavioral expressions • Relate to emotional expressions
Protocol execution	Congratulating	• Laud peers • Conduct social actions (clap and shake hands)
	Acknowledging	• Welcome peers • Express body language (nod, smile, and eye contact)
	Communing	• Personal introductions • Brief conversations about matters of events
Instrumental assistance	Informing	• Provide information • Offer guidance
	Helping	• Physical aid • Advice
Mutual endorsement	Encouraging	• Motivate peers • Reassure peers

Involving	Admiring	• Appreciate peers • Take photos
	Partnering	• Accompany peers • Associate with peers
	Conveying	• Provide a live stream or photos at the event site • Chat online with peers about the live event
Developing relationships	Reuniting	• Approach acquaintances • Have a chat with acquaintances
	Expanding	• Exchange the same interests • Enhance connections afterward
Reflecting	Showing	• Share evidence of the event attendance • Share narration of the event experience
	Recalling	• Think of experiences involving peers • Read posts from peers and remember experiences
Self-cultivation	Following	• Search online content created by peers • Monitor posts of peers
	Complying	• Conform to instructions • Practice step-by-step
Linking interest	Connecting	• Contact peers • Call up peers to run
	Exchanging	• Share running activities • Confide daily life issues
Planning	Choreographing	• Members converse about previous experiences • Members arrange schemes and schedules
	Preparing	• Members deploy delegated tasks • Members perform training practice
Traditional conduct	Greeting	• Members run alongside one another in the final meters • Members hand over the group flag
	Disseminating	• Wear the group uniform • Perform the own actions of the group
Expressing comradeship	Companioning	• Members run together • Members mark milestones of each other

Elevating	Coordinating	- Members collaborate and prepare together - Members briefly discuss running tactics
	Energizing	- Members give inspiring words to one another - Members carry out encouraging actions (hug and fist bump)
	Boosting	- Compete for the fastest group member award - Compete for the most impressive group member award
Sharing	Catching	- Catch group memories with selfies and clips - Catch up on news of the race
	Resting	- Help each other recover - Spend time to share experiences together
Recollecting	Reporting	- Members post photos and short clips from the event - Members post detailed group activities at the event
	Reviewing	- Members discuss event experiences online - Members meet in-person to talk about event experiences
Keeping	Challenging	- Members join online challenges - Members participate in offline challenges
	Cultivating	- Do exercises together frequently - Report running activities on the groups' online channel
Constructing	Celebrating	- Parties for in-group members - Parties for the group
	Supporting	- Members exchange knowledge and understanding of running - Members share everyday topics together
Initiating	Activating	- The crowd of runners checks registration - The crowd of runners participates in pre-race workshops
	Contesting	- The crowd of runners join online games - The crowd of runners share running activities
Ephemeral union	Hoping	- The crowd of runners is involved in lucky draws - The crowd of runners joins the program of top runner rankings
	Gathering	- The crowd of runners lines up at services areas - The crowd of runners converges at entertaining booths

Spreading	Inspiring	• The crowd of runners shouts in the race • The crowd of runners cheers strangers at the finish area
	Publicizing	• The crowd of runners cosplays special characters • The crowd of runners wears the same uniform
Social open-mindedness	Entwining	• The crowd of runners play together • The crowd of runners unite together
	Befriending	• The crowd of runners help strangers • The crowd of runners cooperate with each other
Fulfilling	Documenting	• A collective of participants shares proof from the event • A collective of participants shares stories from the event
	Prolonging	• A collective of participants directs the attention of others to relevant talks or photos • A collective of participants partakes in conversations of the event
Networking	Notifying	• A collective of participants announces information of events • A collective of participants announces information of related activities
	Co-learning	• A collective of participants joins online workshops • A collective of participants joins offline workshops
	Entertaining	• A collective of participants exchanges entertaining threads • A collective of participants seeks prizes in games
Engaging	Consulting	• A collective of participants supports problem-solving • A collective of participants supports decision-making
	Contributing	• A collective of participants provides tips and skills of running • A collective of participants shares special milestones in running journey
	Organizing	• Bring participants together in online collective activities • Bring participants together in offline collective activities

3.5 Findings

3.5.1 C2C value co-creation practices

C2C value co-creation practices conducted by participants are summarized in three levels (individual-, group-, and community-level practices), and each level includes a number of categories and sub-categories of practices. There are twenty-five categories and fifty-four sub-categories across the three practice levels ranging from pre-, during to post-running events, and in participants' lifeworld revolving around daily running activities (see Table 3.3).

Actor units

A key component of C2C value co-creation relates to agents who take on interactions and activities with other people in a given social context. In the running context, there are three levels of interaction, including self- or dyadic participation, group participation, and community participation, which reflect various types of interactions and collective activities among runners.

Table 3.3 A summary of C2C value co-creation practices

Period	Individual-level	Group-level	Community-level
<i>Pre-event</i>	<i>Assembling resources</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Initiating</i>
	Collecting	Choreographing	Activating
	Hunting	Preparing	Contesting
<i>During-event</i>	<i>Other-oriented performance</i>	<i>Traditional conduct</i>	<i>Ephemeral union</i>
	Observing	Greeting	Hoping
	Attaching	Disseminating	Gathering
	<i>Protocol execution</i>	<i>Expressing comradeship</i>	<i>Spreading</i>
	Congratulating	Companioning	Inspiring
	Acknowledging	Coordinating	Publicizing
	Communing		
	<i>Instrumental assistance</i>	<i>Elevating</i>	<i>Social open-mindedness</i>
	Informing	Energizing	Entwining
	Helping	Boosting	Befriending
	<i>Mutual endorsement</i>	<i>Sharing</i>	
	Encouraging	Catching	
	Admiring	Resting	
	<i>Involving</i>		
	Partnering		
<i>Post-event</i>	Conveying		
	<i>Developing relationships</i>		
	Reuniting		
	Expanding		
	<i>Reflecting</i>	<i>Recollecting</i>	<i>Fulfilling</i>
	Showing	Reporting	Prolonging
	Recalling	Reviewing	Documenting
	<i>Self-cultivation</i>	<i>Keeping</i>	<i>Networking</i>
	Following	Challenging	Notifying
	Complying	Cultivating	Co-learning
<i>Daily activities</i>			Entertaining
	<i>Linking interest</i>	<i>Constructing</i>	<i>Engaging</i>
	Connecting	Celebrating	Consulting
	Exchanging	Supporting	Contributing
			Organizing

Self- or dyadic participation

At the individual level, participants may interact with other participants either directly or indirectly. Here, the actor unit represents either self- or dyadic participation. As an example of direct interactions, ID01 described *“I spotted a friend and waited for him at the finish line so we could cheer, take photos, and talk to each other”*. Additionally, another respondent described his experience through indirect interaction with other participants as follow: *“It was very crowded and everyone wore finisher T-shirts from past tournaments ... It was enjoyable to have so many runners who shared the same enthusiasm join me”* (ID09). Here, only one focal runner recognized his relevant interactions with other runners, and his emotions are influenced by other participants.

Group participation

At the group level, several respondents noted: *“Every time a new race was announced, we [I and my friends] coordinated and made a registration form, exchanged tips and insights from various races, and discussed and organized attendance”* (ID11), *“In addition to the race, my nephews and nieces and I participated in some activities such as dance and drawing”* (ID02), *“My coworkers and I got together to talk about our race experiences after it was over. After that, we went to the food court, played, and took selfies”* (ID06), and *“To maintain and foster connections among all runners, we participated in several daily challenges. For example, after completing 5 km today, I tagged the name of another member and requested that he accept the challenge ... Just like that... Then everyone ran together”* (ID14). These quotes demonstrated that the actor unit pertains to group participation including friends, families, coworkers, and running clubs, in which in-group members engage in their own group's activities.

Community participation

Community participation was also observed at the event: *“We even mixed with people from other groups, although none of us knew one another. Unlike in daily life, it didn't require a formal greeting or asking for someone by name. We leapt into the crowd and played together”* (ID05), or on online communities: *“To support the runner Phuc Anh who has won an international race tournament as The Athlete of The Year, everyone shared the poll link and cast their votes. This promoted the popularity of running in society”* (Page of running-community 03). Here, the actor unit refers to community participation in which crowds of runners or a collective of participants in the running communities are involved in communal activities together to contribute to the sake of the temporary communities of events, the running communities, or even society at large.

Before the event

Prior to events, event participants may need a range of resources such as information and event's merchandise and accessories. In addition, some participants may look for companions to elevate their experience at the event. In that case, individuals would engage in *resource assembling* practices (collecting, hunting, and relating) to acquire resources from interactions with other customers, which helped them prepare for the forthcoming experience. For those participants without event's information, they typically search for information shared by other participants on online channels (e.g. running communities), or initiate a direct conversation to ask and receive information from other participants. In that sense, they performed collecting practice. An example is the conversation seen on the Page of running-community 03: *"Member 1: Where can I find the information once I've registered and transferred money? Member 2: You will receive a link with an updated list of participants from the page's admin, and you will then need to wait for a confirmation email from the organizer"*. Also, several individuals performed hunting practice. People who missed the official registration sessions could seek for a Bib (i.e. tickets) from other members of running communities, as ID08 noted: *"Someone posted about a Bib, and I messaged her to discuss how to obtain the Bib"*. Individuals could also exchange event's merchandise and accessories to better fit their needs: *"Hello everyone, to attend this Sunday's running event, I need a size M VietRun T-shirt. If you happen to have one, please get in touch with me. Many thanks!"* (Page of running-community 01). Moreover, to get a companion to advance the feeling of fellowship during the event, individuals conducted relating practice by creating an invitation post on online platform or tagging peers' names on posts from others to ask if any of their peers would like to attend the event together, as observed on the Page of running-community 01: *"I would love to have such a partner too. Let's go together and do not hesitate to contact me"*. Prior studies (e.g. Antón et al., 2018; Cao et al., 2023) have primarily examined information gathering and anticipation of the upcoming events as the general type of individuals' participation prior to the service consumption. Our findings further demonstrate that in addition to information, attendees may need to mobilize other important types of resource (e.g. merchandise and companions) which could ultimately enhance their experiences at the event.

The results demonstrated that, in addition to pre-event C2C value co-creation practice at the individual level, *planning* practices also were carried out by groups before service consumption. This extends prior research which focused on activities at the individual customer level (e.g. Heinonen, 2022; Holmqvist et al. 2020) rather than customer collectives (i.e. a group or a community). The planning category here included choreographing and preparing practices performed in advance to bring the best-customized group experiences during the event. Choreographing practice refers to group members discussing their experiences from past events, which helped them analyze and predict

the upcoming events, reduce the risks and optimize the group's experience: *"Before attending the event, we had a conversation about it... Experienced members shared stories of previous events, and we discussed what to do in this event"* (ID05). They also arranged schemes and schedules for group actions, as described by ID07: *"Members of my group discussed various options for transportation and accommodations several months before the event"*. After agreeing on the plan, the group could then engage in preparing practice to collaboratively perform the delegated tasks as well as practice running together to prepare for the upcoming races, as noted by ID06 and ID09: *"Some members representing the group to buy tickets and pick up Bibs and race kits. Together, we prepared for the event and assembled to attend it"* (ID06); *"I spent several months practicing running with the group members before participating in an official race"* (ID09).

As with the group-level practices, the community-level practices taking place before the event have received little attention in the literature (Heinonen, 2022). In this study, it was evident that participants might conduct *initiating* practices (activating and contesting) in which they joined events' kick-off activities. Prior to the main event, people might engage in activating practice by participating in side events such as joining the opening ceremony to confirm their registration and receive BIBs and race kits, or attending pre-race workshops to share and learn from each other's running experience: *"Many people flocked to this expo area as soon as the marathon village officially opened, waiting in long lines to pick up race kits and bibs from the organizer"* (Field Note, Local Run). Contesting practice was observed on the event's fan page as participants joined the organizers' online games, or used such a space to share their running stories to inspire others and get a reward. An example is a minigame posted on the Fan-page of InterRun: *"Catch the word - try your luck: Participate in this minigame as soon as possible for a chance to win lovely presents, with 50 singlets of the event going to the 50 luckiest players"*.

During the event

A variety of C2C value co-creation practices was witnessed across individual-level during the event, including other-oriented performance, protocol execution, instrumental assistance, mutual endorsement, involving, and developing relationships. The *other-oriented performance* highlighted value co-creation processes stemming from combining a focal customer's resources with those obtained from other customers. Such processes were indirectly influenced by other customers at events. This category includes observing and attaching practices which were evident across all events. Similar to the findings of Colm et al. (2017) which argues that novice customers usually observe other customers' behaviors to obtain understandings to support their own behaviors, here we found that participants who were unfamiliar with the event might engage in observing practice to gather

information and knowledge by paying attention to other customers' conversations or watching how they behave. One respondent said *"Finding a parking lot was the first thing to do. I looked around and observed where people parked their vehicles"* (ID04), suggesting she viewed fellow runners as her go-to sources for insights to facilitate her own behavior. In attaching practice, a participant's experience was influenced by how they perceived the behavioral expressions of other strangers present at the event, or related to the emotional expressions of their companions (e.g. family members and friends), as ID09 and ID02 expressed: *"The moment that I loved the most [...] I saw attendees around two sides of the road howling and clapping. At that time, I just wanted to speed up and step over the finish line to complete the race"* (ID09) and *"I love to see my nephews and nieces participating in social activities that enable them to learn new things. That was why we joined lots of activities during the event (e.g. crafts and entertaining activities). The kids were happy and I loved those moments. That was fantastic!"* (ID02). This is in line with research by Malone et al. (2018), which indicates that the emotions and behaviors of other people might affect how the focal customer interprets the shared experiences, which can affect how he/ she felt.

Participants also behaved with other participants in a social manner or showed etiquette by involving in *protocol execution* practices, as documented in some prior studies (e.g. Nicholls, 2020). In the current study, such practices included congratulating, acknowledging, and communing. In congratulating practice, customers praised other attendees for their achievements by saying nice words (e.g. 'great job' and 'bravo') or conducting social actions (e.g. clap and shake hands). *"A number of runners stood on either side of the medal awarding area and clapped their hands to congratulate other runners who had just crossed the finish line"* (Field Note, Inter Run). Participants were also seen to acknowledge the social presence of strangers by verbally extending a warm welcome or by displaying it through body language like smiles, nods, and eye contact: *"Other runners and I usually smile at each other when we run past each other on the racetrack"* (ID15). In addition, while waiting for the service, customers usually engage in communing practice to start a friendly talk with strangers. This is consistent with prior studies (e.g. Wei et al., 2017). In the current setting, attendees can introduce themselves briefly to people nearby, which brings them comfort and joy: *"In the fun and relaxing vibe of the event, it was very comfortable and extremely easy to start a chit-chat. I had small talks with other attendees, asking about the company they are working for or how long they have been running"* (ID03). They might also carry on the discussion on a wider range of topics related to the event.

Informing and helping practices are housed within the category of *instrumental assistance*, which primarily reflects the types of practical support that customers may offer to other attendees during the service. This is aligned with the sharing Information and helping and supporting practices in a

recreational dance context, as identified by Bianchi (2019). Applied to a running event setting, informing particularly concerned with a participant's sharing general information to other attendees at the event, as noted during the FunRun: *"Some attendees responded to the concerns of others who just arrived and asked about the event process and areas to check in",* or providing detailed guidance on how to participate in particular activities during the event. Such assistance could also be in the form of practical help. Helping could be in terms of offering physical aid through specific actions (e.g. helping to take pictures and providing first aid): *"I felt my calf stretch out and stop while I was running. Suddenly, another runner came over and asked about my case. I told him about my injury, and he assisted me in doing some pain-relieving exercises. I felt very happy"* (ID10), or sharing useful running advice: *"I often read marathon books to get basic knowledge about running. During our conversations at the event, I give other attendees advice on dietary supplements to take before, during, and after runs"* (ID08).

Mutual endorsement practices relate to the customer's approvals or emotional support to other customers (Heinonen et al., 2018). In the current study, such practices were reflected through the act of encouraging and admiring. Encouraging practice typically refers to the motivations that one might receive from other runners on the running track (e.g. encouraging words and high five), which can uplift and provide energy for them to finish the race. In addition, through relatively brief and tenderhearted verbal exchanges, a participant might reassure strangers and make them feel at ease: *"I was running and there was someone feeling exhausted. I approached her and told her 'Try, try', things like that, like I had empathy while running"* (ID06). With regards to admiring, participants also show admirations for other runners via positive words: *"I was passed by a faster runner on the racetrack. 'Oh, so good,' I exclaimed at that moment. I normally express my admirations for these people"* (ID11). Participants also expressed their admiration for well-known professional runners and asked to take a photo together to preserve memories. While expressing admiration for peers in online communities was considered by Ertimur and Gilly (2012), this study further specifies the specific acts of admiration that customers perform for one another within the context of running events.

Another important type of practice during the event is *involving* practices, which highlights the act to engage similar customers in a focal customer's experience to share his/her experience. This was done through partnering and conveying. Regarding the partnering practice, some individuals needed companions at events, so they approached other runners at the event and asked to run together. This was shared by ID10: *"On the race track, I encountered another attendee and asked him about his running target. Then we ran together because we had the same running pace and expected time. Around six kilometers, I controlled the time and reminded him to balance his pace to be able to reach the finish line as our expectation"*. Runners could also share associations with peers by wearing the

finisher T-shirts from previous tournaments as a sign of similarity among a subset of attendees; this served as a medium to establish contact with other peers. Individuals also sought interactions with others who could relate to and appreciate their experiences by conveying the event experience to peers who were unable to attend the event. Here, they could offer real-time reporting from the event, share pictures from it, or engage in online peer discussions about it: *“As soon as I crossed the finish line, I posted photos from the event on my Facebook timeline to share my personal achievements and the exciting atmosphere of the event”* (ID06). While a focal customer's value co-creation involving others through virtual social contacts has been examined in prior research (e.g. Fan et al., 2020; Uhrich et al., 2023), this study also demonstrated the way attendees involve other peers in their on-site service experiences.

Running events also represent an opportunity to develop old and new rapports through open-hearted encounters among customers when they undertook practices of *developing relationships*, which include reuniting and expanding. Attendees may incidentally meet an acquaintance (Nordvall et al., 2014; Fernandes and Krolikowska, 2023). Such an instance was described as one of the best experiences at FunRun by ID04; she and her old friend recognized and approached each other with sweet greetings and a tight hug. This is an example of the reuniting practice, which may include a brief encounter with acquaintances. These reunion opportunities could also be extended with longer talks, as ID01 shared that in-person conversations with people he had previously interacted with on social media platforms help transform the relationships in real life. Expanding practice, on the other hand, refers to how customers made new friends through prolonged conversations with peers about similar interests. As an example, ID01 said: *“I put on a ‘Northern FPT’ T-shirt at the event. Someone also approached me to start a conversation: ‘Are you from the FPT club? Do you know Mr. Long? How long has your club been established? How does your club work?’ We talked and invited each other to practice running together after the event”*. Relationship could even be developed further when participants exchanged their contact details and invited peers to run together after the event. This result is in line with Bianchi's (2019) research, which explains how interpersonal connections made during the event can result in opportunities for socializing outside of the service setting.

In addition to the individual-level practices, the data also revealed a range of group-level practices during the event, such as traditional conduct, expressing comradeship, elevating, and sharing practices. These were made feasible by the physical layouts and programming elements of events created specifically for customer groups such as families, friends, colleagues, and running tribes. Members jointly carry out the *traditional conduct* practices such as greeting and disseminating to perform the group rituals. To enact greeting practice, groups might gather a short distance from the finish line, assigning some of their members to run alongside those who were about to finish the race.

Other groups could congregate near the finish line and give the group flag to other group members who were about to cross the finish line: *"Members who had already completed the race were nominated by the running clubs to carry their club's flag. Then, they would go up to particular participants who were close to finishing and pass the flag to them."* (Field Note, LocalRun). As for disseminating practice, members might give outsiders a favorable impression of the group by conforming to their group norms and rules, such as dressing in the group uniform or performing the group's own actions. For example, ID06 at InterRun shared that members wore T-shirts with her company's logo on the back to reinforce their social identity. These findings show that C2C value co-creation practices are not limited to families (Cerdan Chiscano, 2023) but also exist in other groups, such as coworkers and running tribes.

The emerging sense of responsibility and collaboration among members was also evident in practices of *expressing comradeship*, which include companionship and coordinating. Prior research has suggested companionship during events as the key to improve the group's experience and foster unity among group members (Kim and Choi, 2016). In the current context, attendees may conduct companionship practice by running alongside other group members: *"They ran with the slower members to help them keep pace and push them to complete the race and achieve their objectives"* (ID01). They can also film each other's accomplishments to celebrate milestones: *"At some racetrack stations, groups lingered for a while to take pictures of the milestone (such as a one-kilometer milestone) to document their accomplishments."* (Field Note, FunRun). The findings also uncovered the coordinating practice, which refers to group members working together to enhance shared experience and achieve shared goals. Such a practice aligned with the findings of Fu and Lehto (2018) and Melvin et al. (2020). Here, it was evident that group members collaborated to get ready for the race (e.g. preparation of costumes and running items). For groups that wished to compete in the group challenge, group members might briefly discuss running tactics before starting the race, as ID03 shared: *"We talked about a few strategies before the race began... Everyone also helps each other out throughout the race"*.

Elevating practices, including energizing and boosting, refer to activities taken by groups to enhance their customized experiences (Torres et al., 2018). In energizing practice, members joined in each other's experiences via inspiring words: *"When I reached the finish line, all my group members gave me cheers, compliments, and encouraging words. I felt really great"* (ID10). Group members might also carry out encouraging actions, as noted during the InterRun: *"Some members of a running tribe gathered and waited at an area on the race track. When another member ran across this area, one of them reached that member to give him a hug and a fist bump"*. While energizing practice aims at enhancing friendships, boosting practice strengthened members' experiences through

competitions initiated by their group at the event. For example, they might compete for the fastest group member and the most impressive group member awards, as mentioned by ID06: *"The group offered prizes to encourage members to attempt finishing the race in the shortest amount of time"*.

As some prior studies have noted, customers may engage in group-oriented actions to increase feelings of fellowship among group members (e.g. Lehto et al., 2017). In the present context, such actions were manifested by the *sharing* practices, which include catching and resting. Accordingly, catching practice refers to group members capturing shared memories and moments with selfie photos and clips: *"After finishing the race, group members gathered at the medal-awarding spot and then took selfies together to keep good memories"* (ID06). Following the race, groups could congregate close to the finish line to catch up on the outcomes and events that happened during the race. It was also observed that resting practice was performed as group members assisted one another in recovering *"Members of groups gathered in the central area to recover after a long race"*, or spent some time together to unwind, eat, and take in the event atmosphere *"They played together, enjoyed food and drinks, had fun, and joked with other group members"* (InterRun, field note).

A range of C2C value co-creation practices at the community level during events also emerged from the data, comprising ephemeral union, spreading, and social open-mindedness. Prior research suggests that customers may congregate together to participate in short-lived shared activities (Carù and Cova, 2015). It was clear from the running event context that crowds of participants also engaged in such *ephemeral union* practices, as evidenced by the act of hoping and gathering. In hoping practice, crowds of participants join each other to anticipate the outcome of race-related activities. Activities in this case could be lucky draws or the top runner rankings: *"A group of runners gathered in front of the stage to wait for the race's outcome... They created a joyful atmosphere by talking, laughing, and even yelling together"* (MovementRun, field note). As events normally have non-racing entertainment and services, participants were also involved in gathering practice when they assembled for such side activities, like lining up at service areas or converging at entertaining booths: *"A crowd of strangers participated in push-up games within the expo village"* (InterRun, field note).

Spreading practices referred to the collective activities to bring positive effects to the running community of the event and society. This type of practice has received little attention in C2C value co-creation research to date (Heinonen et al., 2018; Uhrich et al., 2023). Crowds of participants often run together on the racetrack and shout to inspire each other: *"They ran and shouted 'Hang in there, win together' and everyone also went, 'Ooh!' and cheered loudly"* (LocalRun, field note). Another common observation made during the five events was that most attendees gathered at the finish area to encourage and applaud strangers who were approaching the finish line. These activities, called inspiring practice, positively contributed to the social vibe of the event. Additionally, in order to

spread a message about a social issue such as environmental protection and children's rights, publicizing practice was carried out by crowds of participants as they creatively displayed symbolic items and artifacts (e.g. wearing cosplay costumes to adhere to the theme initiated by the organizer). Sometimes participants need to follow certain rules and norms at the event to express similarity with the contemporary community there: *"Some groups of runners were dressed in '60+ Earth Hour' black T-shirts, other groups put on '60+ Earth Hour' white T-shirts, and other runners brought 'Save Energy, Save Earth' banners as well to deliver a message of environmental protection to the community and society"* (MovementRun, field note).

As noted in prior research, customers may demonstrate their immersion in the atmosphere at events through extraordinary and exuberant interactions with one another, which helps them escape the stress of daily life and subsequently enhances a sense of collective connectedness (Chen et al., 2021). In the context of running events, this was realized through *social open-mindedness* practices, which include entwining and befriending. In entwining practice, customers viewed strangers as equals with everyday social rules dissolved; consequently, crowds of participants might easily play together, as noted by ID04: *"Everyone was similar when attending the event. For example, when the crowd went through a station, there was colored powder falling down incidentally. While some could avoid it, unlucky others were stuck to it. The crowd approached those people to joke and play together"*. Further, strangers could also unite as a group to participate in activities at the event. In befriending practice, unacquainted participants demonstrated a spirit of friendship by actively offering support to and cooperating with one another, fostering a sense of caring and trust: *"When one runner suddenly stopped, other runners immediately came over to help. They asked about the injury and assisted that person"* (LocalRun, field note).

After the event

A number of C2C value co-creation practices across the individual, group and community levels emerged from the data. For example, following the event, participants may share their thoughts and feelings on various social media platforms, such as their own social media pages (e.g. personal timeline on Facebook or Instagram), group's social media pages, or the running communities' social media pages. These instances might be invisible to providers (Holmqvist et al. 2020).

At the individual level, many participants engaged in *reflecting* practices, i.e. engaging in the self with introspective or reflexive actions, to enhance their experiences after the event. Particularly, showing practice was performed as a way to document memorable experiences. Some participants mentioned sharing photos of symbolic items from the event on their own timeline as a proof of their attendance. Participants who were more impressed with the event were more likely to remember the

positive experiences and tell others about them. For example, ID11 said: *“I shared my story of the running events on social media because I felt proud of attending such events and obtaining my own achievements. Also, I hope that everyone found fun in my running stories and eventually came to the running event together”*. Those examples were mainly in the intangible domain of emotions. In addition, various incidents triggered people to engage in recalling practice and derive post-event pleasure. Some respondents mentioned the instance they thought of the experiences they had at the event with their peers, or how reading posts from their peers brought back memories: *“I contemplated the positive aspects of the event after attending. I was able to escape everyday life, and I got along well with the other attendees”*, as shared by ID05.

Although the collective activities of a group or community following service consumption are largely overlooked in the service literature (Carù and Cova, 2015), the results highlighted a crucial group-level practice that participants may take part in following the event. Group members were found to engage in *recollecting* practices, which relate to group sharing, meeting and discussing the event they attended. Particularly, group members not only shared their experiences on their personal social media pages but also expanded the online sharing to the group's platform as they engaged in reporting practice. This involved posting pictures, short videos, and in-depth narratives of their experiences on the group page to share their trip with other members: *“In the afternoon or the day following the race, people started sharing the results of the race (e.g. how many hours it took them to finish the race). They also shared the pictures captured by the event organizer with the group.”* (ID11). Further, some groups undertook reviewing practice as they get together after the event and discuss about the experience they had, as ID08 stated that most running groups consider a “post-event party” to be “routine”. Such a discussion about memorable moments could also be extended to online discussions: *“My group members often engage in online discussions after the race to share their personal achievements, experiences of problems on the race, health status, and ways to overcome incidents and treat injuries”* (ID03).

In terms of community-level practices, participants together joined in extensive communications on social media to deepen their and others' experiences, which was identified as *fulfilling* practices, as manifested through the act of documenting and prolonging. While some participants only shared their experiences with their private or group channels, others wanted to share their stories with a more targeted group of audience (e.g. running peers) in order to spread the word about their experiences and get recognition. In that case, the participants engaged in documenting practice by using running community's platforms to share proof from the events (e.g. medals, finisher T-shirt) or their stories: *“The ultra-trail run – a memorable experience: ... I had started the regular training routine only 3 weeks before the event... When I got to the event location at 7:15 a.m., I realized all of a sudden*

that I forgot my Bib... After catching up with the running group, I felt much more energetic... As the sun's rays intensified, my shoulders began to turn red... After a while, I ran alongside the first companion in the event..." (Page of running-community 03). In prolonging practice, participants usually tag names of each other on the talks or pictures as a catalyst for memory recall. Participants also chat with each other by making humorous remarks about a memorable occasion during the event. As observed on Page of running-community 01: *"Photos of cartoon characters participating in the race or a girl running 42 kilometers without shoes were shared. These were quite interesting and everyone gave comments such as 'for sure, this was the most beautiful and funniest picture' or 'why she could complete her race like this'"*.

Daily activities

The study also uncovered a range of C2C value co-creation practices that people use to maintain their running routines and nurture and pursue their passions in life, which have rarely been empirically discussed in the literature (Heinonen, 2022). Based on the data, it appears that individuals might engage in self-cultivation and linking interest practices in their daily lives. While the former practice referred to individuals obtaining knowledge, conforming to directions, and feeling joy based on catching up on online content created by peers, the latter referred to individuals sharing their passion and lending a friendly ear to others in pursuing a common interest.

Specifically, *self-cultivation* practices comprised following and complying. In following practice, individuals found useful information, inspiration, and enjoyment in searching for general running information posted by other runners, as ID08 mentioned *"Individuals often follow information on the training schedules, workshops on nutrition and first aid, and a sale-off for running products shared by other members on online channels"*. Another option for them is to target specific professionals or role models to follow and keep an eye on posts regarding the content they find relevant and interesting, such as running tips, running nutrition, and running accessories. Individuals were also found to perform complying practice by conforming to instructions (e.g. nutrition and diet) or performing in accordance with exercises provided by others (e.g. training tips and techniques) to improve running activities: *"I regularly follow the posts that experienced runners shared about running techniques and practice accordingly"* (ID16).

Linking interest practices, which aims at keeping up relationships with other runners to further feed the enthusiasm for running, include connecting and exchanging. In connecting practice, individuals kept in touch with people they met at the event, as noted by ID02: *"I occasionally messaged my friends from the event on Facebook to ask about their lives or to see if they would like to catch up. In order to maintain relationships, I also left comments on their posts or contacted them via apps"*.

Apparently, individuals may wish to maintain contact with their peers in order to strengthen the relationships and run together in future events. Occasionally, individuals might want to connect with and invite other runners to accompany them on a new running route. Besides, people also engaged in exchanging practice to maintain comradeship with like-minded people. This could be done by exchanging running-related knowledge and activities in order to keep up a regular running schedule. For example, ID11 from InterRun stated that the friendship she developed with people from the event was meaningful: *"I usually have connections with some people so that we can share and support each other to keep a running routine"*. Apart from exchanging running-related topics, sustaining connections with people they met at events can offer a safe space for them to talk about life's issues.

The findings also revealed how group members co-created value in their lifeworld via keeping and constructing practices. *Keeping* practices (challenging and cultivating) referred to group members regularly joining running activities together as a shared lifestyle. In challenging practice, members participated in online and offline challenges to enhance each other's running activities. A good example is given by ID01: *"The group created a challenge for members. The number of kilometers to be completed in a month was specified by the group. If someone cannot meet the target, he/she will be fined 5.000 VND per km, with the money going into the group's fund"*. In cultivating practice, members engaged in running exercises together on a regular basis: *"Members who share similar goals and running routines will arrange schedules and locations to run together. We practice and share our training outcomes with one another"* (ID10). Moreover, after each training session, group members reported their running activities on the group's online channel, which helped to lift each other's motivation to run over time: *"Members gave motivation to each other to run daily. After each race, we took photos and posted them and details of the track road on online discussions to check in and show these accomplishments to others. Besides sustaining routine and physical, anytime there are new races, if can arrange the time, we will attend for sure"*, as shared by ID06.

Constructing practices (celebrating and supporting) were also evident in group members' daily running life. Such practices focused on promoting bonds among members via social activities and assistance for running and life-related issues. By taking part in celebrations for the group (such as the group establishment ceremony) or for in-group members (such as birthday celebrations), members carried out their celebrating practice: *"The group's male members met at 6:00 a.m. on October 20 (the Vietnamese Women's Day) to go for a quick run together. We recorded and checked in at each milestone, and we could sent the videos and some well wishes to the female members"* (ID09). Members also supported each other by exchanging knowledge and understanding of running or remedies for life concerns, as demonstrated in ID13's story: *"After the group's training sessions, we*

often spend time sharing experiences of different racing routes, how to run effectively and distribute energy for the whole race, and so on [...]. We also talk about stories of work and life”.

In every running community that was observed, networking and engaging emerged as critical practice categories at the community level. While earlier studies (e.g., Johnson and Buhalis, 2023; Kumar and Kumar, 2020) mainly examined customers’ collective interactions in virtual and brand communities through social media and technology, the findings further show that participants engaged in C2C value co-creation practices both offline and online in the context of their own lives.

Networking practices included notifying, co-learning, and entertaining, in which participants interacted with each other to exchange information and knowledge to master running skills and obtain entertaining opportunities. In notifying practice, participants disseminated useful information about running events or related activities (e.g. running gear sales and training sessions). This was listed on the Page of running-community 02: *“Hi! There will be a marathon in Ho Chi Minh City soon. To receive a free running ticket, you can participate in #minigame- [...] following the link below”*. Participants also engaged in co-learning practice as they attended online or offline workshops relating to running activities to discuss and obtain new understandings and skills. *“Every month, the running community hosts muscle-training sessions and workshops on topics like nutrition, running techniques, and running-related issues. These events allow people to discuss and enhance their running practices”* (ID10). Moreover, some participants performed entertaining practice by exchanging online interesting topics or jointly sought prizes in games initiated by sponsors: *“Running community members who completed 200 kilometers per week and posted daily updated running schedule were entered into a lucky draw to win prizes, such as Casio watches”* (ID08).

Engaging practices, which include consulting, contributing, and organizing, referred to maintaining and operating running communities. Community members actively constructed a consulting community as they were enthusiastic to respond to any running-related queries such as support for problem-solving or decision-making: *“People usually give advice and guidance to each other. For example, in some running communities, members typically discuss how to select the right shoes for their running style”* (ID01). They also undertook contributing practice by providing knowledge, skills, and hints or sharing special milestones in the running journey for enhancing others’ running passion, as noted on the Page of running-community 01: *“The well-deserved reward for the sweat on races is the medal collection. Each medal is a memorable moment! On the occasion of unboxing the race kit for tomorrow’s race, I want to share the medal collection to strengthen the spirit of brothers and sisters to finish the race! Wishing you all good health for tomorrow’s battle!!!”*. Furthermore, participants jointly organized online or offline collective activities to bring participants together, which helps develop and nourish sustainable communities, as shared by ID08: *“Occasionally,*

the running community arranges running activities to raise funds for underprivileged people in the highlands or for children in need”.

3.5.2 A extensive framework of C2C value co-creation

The exploration of practices above enables the development of an extensive framework of C2C value co-creation (Figure 3.1), wherein they can be organized along two dimensions to depict the entire phenomenon across pre-, during, and post-running events and in participants’ lifeworld. These two dimensions stem from the interpretation of the identified practices together with the reference to the theoretical foundation such as C2C interaction, value creation, C2C value co-creation, social practices, social psychology, consumer research, cultural studies, brand communities, and the C-D logic perspective. Consequently, the framework draws on (1) the locus of practice and (2) the scope of practice to distinguish between four circles of C2C value co-creation, comprising the blurred area, self-organizing area, open area, and integrated area, which are positioned along the scope of practice. While the top half of each circle is visible to the service provider, the other part is mostly invisible. Although it is more challenging for providers to influence practices away from the visible zone, they can benefit by comprehending the complexity of C2C value co-creation and identifying potential strategic actions.

First, the locus of practice concerns whether value formation from C2C value co-creation practices occurs in the joint sphere (the zone visible to the service provider) or customer sphere (the zone invisible to the service provider). Grönroos and Voima (2013) and Heinonen et al. (2010) outline three conceptual domains of value creation that this study adapts to apply to C2C value co-creation practices. On one side on the vertical axis, participants co-create value via cooperatively and creatively interactive activities with experiential platforms offered by the service provider to shape and develop their own experiences with each other. For example, groups of participants gathered at the finish line to conduct the groups’ own rituals while waiting for their peers to complete the race. On the other side, participants co-create value with each other via self-activities with the service provider’s presence in a physical or abstract sense to independently mold and organize their own experiences. For instance, groups aggregated after events to share memorable moments, special features of running kits, and photos taken from events.

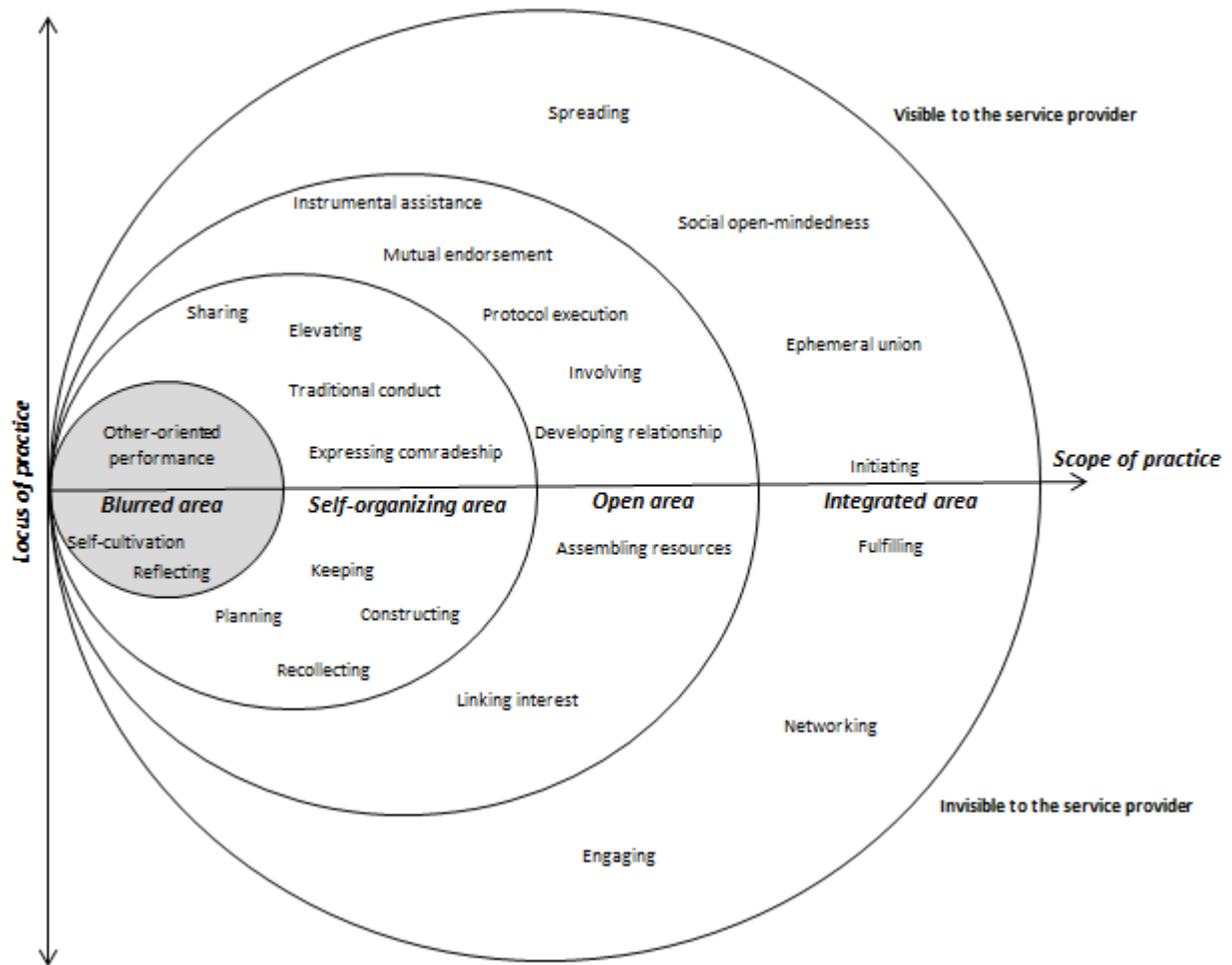


Figure 3.1 An extensive framework of C2C value co-creation

Second, the scope of practice highlights participants engaging in an interactive extent ranging from implicit encounters through in-group and sharing-out interactions among participants to socially immersive activities. Heinonen and Nicholls's (2022) conceptualization of C2C interaction, Tajfel's (1982) idea of in-groups, the lens of social villages (Oliver, 1999) and commercial friendships (Rosenbaum, 2006), and the notions of communitas (Turner, 1995) and sub-cultures (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) or brand communities (Muniz Jr and O'Guinn, 2001) are useful concepts to help illuminate the horizontal axis of the framework, more particularly the positions of four circles of C2C value co-creation.

The blurred area can be interpreted by using the notion of C2C interaction. Generally, inter-customer interactions are viewed as verbally- and/or physically-centered and either direct or indirect encounters (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022). In the blurred area, only one customer is aware of his/her relevant contact (i.e. indirect and implicit encounters) with other customers. For instance, participants

engage in other-oriented performance or self-cultivation practices. In line with Tajfel's (1982) in-group conceptualization, the self-organizing area comprises C2C value co-creation practices oriented at in-groups (families, friends, colleagues, and running tribes). In-groups are characterized as a membership that an individual identifies with and the in-group membership binds its members with loyalty and trust. In the context of events, in-groups could be seen to include groups coming to events together and engaging in sharing practices or conducting planning and keeping practices in their lifeworld.

The concepts of social villages (Oliver, 1999) and commercial friendships (Rosenbaum, 2006) are of relevance in illustrating the open area. Social villages draw together participants with a presumed common set of values and attitudes. It shows a social alliance emerging in commercial settings, wherein the friendship and the sense of togetherness that participants obtain from forming part of the social village. Transient talks, helping, encouraging words, and sharing actions take place among participants in social villages, in line with practices of protocol execution, instrumental assistance, mutual endorsement, involving, and developing relationships at events. Moreover, commercial friendships may last outside the confines of a specific service and lead to return and loyalty (Oliver, 1999). It can be seen in practices of linking interest, in which individuals connect and maintain comradeship with like-minded people to exchange running activities, confide about personal issues, and even invite each other to attend the next events.

The notions of *communitas* (Turner, 1995) and sub-cultures (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) or brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001) are clearly reflected in the integrated area. Turner (1995) points to social barriers removed from participants' daily routines and ordinary lives when they join in temporary *communitas* with the state of liminality. The emergence of unstructured *communitas* can be observed in individuals merging and melting together through social open-mindedness practices into event communities. A sense of kinship and belongingness can go beyond the boundary of events, resulting in a long-term commitment to the community and potentially to the events. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) discuss about sub-cultures formed around particular brands, genres, or lifestyle activities, existing in modern society. Similarly, brand communities (Muniz Jr and O'Guinn, 2001) show a kind of collective including individuals seeking to identify themselves with others via sharing, entertaining, or supporting peers to enhance common bonds in specific interests, as can be viewed in networking and engaging practices in this running event context.

3.6 Discussion and conclusion

C2C value co-creation practices represent a crucial facet of value formation (Heinonen et al., 2018; Nguyen and Menezes, 2021), making them a prominent theme in service research. C2C value co-creation is even more prevalent in sport event contexts (Kim et al., 2020). In this study, we examined

C2C value co-creation practices from the customer-dominant logic. Particularly, we uncovered a number of C2C value co-creation practices, based on which an extensive framework of C2C value co-creation was developed. The study provides a more comprehensive understanding of a range of C2C value co-creation practices that may occur before, during, or after service consumption, and in the customers' daily lives, using a variety of qualitative data collection techniques. The findings suggest that value co-creation may result from interactions amongst individuals, individuals from the same group participating in activities within their own group, a sizable gathering of community members engaging in activities collectively. Thus, it demonstrates C2C value co-creation as rich, dynamic, and complex processes. Through detailed and thick descriptions of C2C value co-creation practices, this study makes some pivotal contributions.

3.6.1 Theoretical contributions

First, this study expands the understanding of value formation from C2C value co-creation by uncovering customers' interactive practices with each other (i.e. interactions and collective activities among customers) pre-, during, and post service consumption and in their daily lives. Surprisingly, an investigation on customers' overall experiences and how they co-create value with each other in their own life contexts is largely missing in the literature. Here, a C-D logic lens, which views customers' experiences during service consumption and in their daily lives as inherently intertwined (Heinonen et al., 2010), helps extend the scope of C2C value co-creation practices beyond what takes place during service processes (e.g. Bianchi, 2019; Pandey and Kumar, 2020), on virtual communities (e.g. Johnson and Buhalis, 2023), or in a single episode of service consumption (e.g. Carvalho et al., 2023, Cao et al., 2023; Elettigera et al., 2021).

Second, by articulating the specific actions in which C2C value co-creation practices are embodied and the ways in which various social units co-create value, the study identifies a number of C2C value co-creation practices within the contexts of customers' own lives. Some of the identified practices are novel and have yet to be codified in prior research (e.g. self-cultivation, linking interest, keeping, and constructing); some other practices have been identified in service or brand community literature, albeit with some modifications. For example, planning here refers to members' joint activities to prepare and customize their group experience before the event, while this practice has been primarily examined at the individual level in the service literature (Holmqvist et al., 2020). Additionally, networking in this study refers to the practice of customers exchanging knowledge and information to master running skills and entertain together in either online or offline settings, while brand community research describes this as a reinforcement of the homogeneity of the virtual brand

community (Schau et al., 2009). Consequently, this work opens up new directions for future research on C2C value co-creation.

Third, the derived extensive framework characterizing and synthesizing four circles of C2C value co-creation practices shows a clear picture of the scope of the phenomenon in new domains that could be invisible to providers. Such findings can aid service researchers in interpreting and designing future studies on C2C value co-creation. For instance, research might be conducted to understand the relative importance of different C2C value co-creation domains, or the factors that contribute to C2C value co-creation in a particular domain.

Fourth, this study adds depth to the understanding of value creation using a C-D logic perspective. To date, there hasn't been a lot of empirical research done on the C2C value co-creation process (Pandey and Kumar, 2021). By adopting a customer lifeworld approach to value creation, this study contributes to and deepens the understanding of the C-D logic lens in service research (Anker et al., 2022). The empirical investigation also offers unique insights into how interactive value co-creation among customers takes place in customers' own life contexts, thus making a significant contribution to the work on C2C value co-creation (e.g. Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022; Uhrich et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2022).

Finally, this study responds to a call for more research in shared and collective service consumption contexts, particularly sport events (Fernandes and Krolukowska, 2023; Luna-Cortés, 2017). The results make it clear that events represent a platform for fostering pre-existing relationships, such as those with families, friends, and tribes, as well as promoting social connections. Such contexts also present opportunities for brief encounters and these initial bonds can lead to larger and longer-lasting networks (Duffy and Mair, 2021). Therefore, we encourage researchers to continue to explore social networks between customers by looking beyond the narrow service management paradigm of the immediate experience at events.

3.6.2 Managerial implications

The results of this study have significant implications for mass service providers. It is becoming evident that customers are at the center of C2C value co-creation practices, and providers can only partially influence them. As a result, it is critical that service providers get involved in C2C value co-creation processes by observing what customers do with each other to accomplish their own goals in order to better understand their activities. Only then can providers provide the support that will increase value outcomes for customers.

Strategic actions to support C2C value co-creation could be developed in accordance with the variety of C2C value co-creation practices in customers' own social contexts before, during, and after

events, as well as in the daily activities of customers. Such supports can be leveraged to facilitate C2C value co-creation practices at the individual-, group- and community levels. Online exchanges, for instance, could assist each participant in efficiently assembling resources before the event. Thus, the event's social media page could be used by providers as a space for online discussions and resource exchanges. In order to promote collective interactions among participants, providers can further cultivate C2C value co-creation practices at the community level by including additional touchpoints, such as kick-off ceremonies, workshops, and contests, prior to the main events. More examples and detailed explanations of how different strategic actions could be applied prior to, during, and after events as well as in the day-to-day activities of customers are provided in Table 3.4. Additionally, it is essential to segment customers into different groups in order to apply strategies that are better aligned with each group's objectives and aspirations in terms of C2C value co-creation. It is important to note that even though these examples are made especially for sporting events, they might be applicable to other service contexts. In order to create and implement effective strategies, service providers must take into account the contexts in which their businesses operate.

It should be noted that as cultural differences may cause variations in C2C value co-creation practices, culture may have a significant influence on the relevance and effectiveness of the proposed strategic actions. Since this study was conducted in Vietnam, the emphasis of strategic actions is on the collectivist nature with group cohesion as well as harmony among people in their societies. The study identified a number of group-level practices during the service process (e.g. traditional conduct, sharing) as well as pre- and post-service consumption (e.g. planning, recollecting) and in customers' daily life (e.g. keeping, constructing). These findings are more likely to stem from the collectivist societies' cultural characteristics, where individuals are more likely to connect and act together to strengthen bonds and promote group cohesion. As another example, participants engaged in the linking interest practice to experience and share running activities with like-minded people beyond service consumption, or they engaged in the relating practice to invite others to attend the events together. These actions are consistent with the tendency of people from Asian cultures to fit in, attend to and behave in ways that enhance harmony with others in their societies. With these unique characteristics in mind, service providers operating in different cultural contexts need to consider how cultural factors may impact the patterns and conditions surrounding C2C value co-creation practices.

Table 3.4 Strategic actions to support C2C value co-creation practices

Phase	Level	Practices	Strategic actions	
			Strategy	Examples
Before the event	Individual	Assembling resources	<i>Online exchanges:</i> Designing and structuring various features on events' official pages to attract common interests and encourage communication between participants	Spaces for discussing general information, connecting, and arranging shared transport
	Group	Planning	<i>Supportive resources:</i> Providing information, offers, and activities to enable participants to arrange and prepare for their group experiences	Group discounts, group-based training sections, and information about group-based programs in events, accommodations, restaurants, and tourist attractions
	Community	Initiating	<i>Auxiliary activities:</i> Expanding additional touchpoints such as kick-off ceremonies, workshops, and contests outside the main events to foster collective interactions among participants	Exchanging and sharing knowledge, understanding, and tips in the long run workshop or joining in online games of the best inspirable and impressive video clips, pictures, and stories for awards
During the event	Individual	Other-oriented performance	<i>Perception management:</i> Organizational efforts to ensure the right and suitable behaviors and create a cheerful and harmonious environment	Clearly communicating rules, codes of behavior, and instructions; designing physical spaces to draw participants into firing up others; organizing child-friendly activities to involve parents/relatives in
		Protocol execution	<i>Employee capability:</i> Training employees as role models to motivate participants in performing the	Employees' welcoming and chummy expressions via nodding, smiling, greeting, and congratulating

		expected activities and bring about a friendly environment	
	Instrumental assistance	<i>Support citizenship:</i> Facilitating and expressing appreciation for participants' assistance to others	Constantly and spaciouly communicating relevant information and basic knowledge of running as well as showing gratitude via narratives of kindness on different channels
	Mutual endorsement	<i>Additional policy:</i> Promoting the spirit of solidarity and positive attitude among participants	Verifying extra terms "together, we are one" in the registration
	Involving	<i>Segmentation and supportive resources:</i> Dividing participants into groups to improve compatibility and enhancing the online accessibility	Running groups "5Km", "10Km", "21Km", and "42Km"; providing free high-speed Wi-Fi and attractive spots for selfies
	Developing relationships	<i>Sociopetal spaces and programs:</i> Designing functional areas and programming aspects to facilitate amiable encounters and conversations	The recovering hubs; the "speed-dating" activity; the repeat registration rewarded with a special T-shirt or Bib to advance identity, hence promoting connections among participants
Group	Traditional conduct	<i>Additional policy:</i> Encouraging groups of participants to enact specific rituals of theirs	Advocating for wearing groups' own uniforms, shouting loudly names of groups at the finish area, and delivering pictures and video clips of impressive groups on social media
	Expressing comradeship	<i>Programs:</i> Designing group-oriented competitions to facilitate bonds and co-operations among members	Prizes for groups attaining one of the best achievements or awards for groups with the most impressive dresses

			Elevating	<i>Supportive resources:</i> Providing physical spaces and facilities for team games to empower groups to organize and experience together	Allocating special zones for group activities or equipping water guns and color powders
			Sharing	<i>Sociopetal spaces:</i> Designing functional areas to encourage group members to come together	Centre relaxing area and attractive locations
			Community union	<i>Programs:</i> Encouraging participants to create a shared sense of excitement via effective programming	Activities such as lucky draws, flash mobs, physical games, and celebrations at the finish line
			Spreading	<i>Employee capability and programs:</i> Well-trained employees and a combination of the main event with particular activities relating to social issues to inspire the involvement of collectives	Employees encourage participants to perform “mass massage” or shout the slogan “Try, try, try, we all win” and the event attracts participants for conducting common activities “holding ‘save the earth’ banners while running”
			Social open-mindedness	<i>Ambiance and interior design:</i> Creating an immersive environment to facilitate the levelling of daily social norms	Lighting, festive symbols, and sounds or catering alcoholic drinks
After the event	Individual	Reflecting		<i>Supportive resources:</i> Providing the environment and items relating to the event to facilitate participants’ sharing of experiences	Medals, T-shirts, gifts, online content such as photos or video clips, and online communication spaces
	Group	Recollecting		<i>Auxiliary activities:</i> Post-event online contests as a catalyst for intra-group activities	Sharing about the group’s activities and experiences in the journey to participate in the event

	Community	Fulfilling	<i>Online exchanges and auxiliary activities:</i> Promoting collective interactions among participants through relevant channels	Providing topics for online conversations or organizing post-event meetings
Daily activities	Individual	Self-cultivation	<i>Online exchanges:</i> Enhancing the diversity, quality, and reliability of content contributed by participants on events' official pages to attract participants' interest	Offering different discussion features such as Q&A, entertaining, and daily practices; awarding the engaged participants; engaging with influential individuals or KOLs
		Linking interest	<i>Online exchanges:</i> Designing spaces and activities to encourage forming associations between participants for further interactions	"Friendzone" section to mate between participants
	Group	Keeping	<i>Auxiliary activities:</i> Providing group-based online contests to affect groups' activities in ordinary life	"Relay marathon" games over 90 days
		Constructing	<i>Auxiliary activities:</i> Creating occasions for groups to form a routine for a group gathering	Periodical group-oriented practice events
	Community	Networking	<i>Partnering:</i> Collaborating with sponsors to support running communities' attempts in enhancing collective activities among members	Creating workshops on nutrition or training and online competitions awarded running shoes and watches
		Engaging	<i>Partnering:</i> Establishing a role as a dedicated representative working with running communities to advance collective contributions and develop collective activities	Providing offers for the active members and running communities when attending events and regularly implementing the local training sessions for members across various locations

3.6.3 Limitations and future research

The study has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, in order to derive a set of C2C value co-creation practices, a qualitative approach was used. However, such an approach did not allow generalizations of the findings. Further research may apply quantitative methods to investigate the most prevalent practices in different service contexts and examine the relevant antecedents and outcomes of such practices. Second, the research is confined within a single context (i.e. running events). The derived extensive framework may be utilized as a theoretical foundation for empirical research in other socially dense service contexts (e.g. festivals and tourism). Third, the primary objective of the research was to explore a set of C2C value co-creation practices. The specific types of benefits from the derived set of practices and the corresponding strategies to facilitate such practices could be explored in further studies. On a related note, future studies may look at both positive and negative value outcomes so that providers could take proactive actions to detect and prevent possible negative effects, as there might be value co-destruction from C2C interactions (Calhau Codá and Silva Farias, 2022; Plé and Cáceres, 2010). Finally, the data were collected in Vietnam. As what constitutes C2C value co-creation practices may vary significantly in different societies, it would be beneficial to investigate the phenomenon in other cultures.

CHAPTER 4

CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER VALUE CO-CREATION: A CUSTOMER-DOMINANT FRAMEWORK OF VALUE

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4.1 Abstract

Drawing on customer-dominant logic and running events contexts, this paper develops a customer-dominant framework of value that outlines customers' interactions with other peers in service encounters and their lifeworld. In-depth interviews, netnography, and observational data uncovered eighteen customer-to-customer value co-creation activities, through which a two-dimensional framework was developed. It represents the multifaceted nature of value formation involving multiple collective contexts. It also adds insights into collective and societal benefits stemming from customer-to-customer value co-creation activities and specifies the different types of service providers' involvement in such activities. The study concludes with a strategic framework to facilitate customer-to-customer value co-creation.

Keywords: customer-to-customer value co-creation, customer-dominant logic, value, framework, sports event

4.2 Introduction

Customers interact with each other in a variety of service contexts, besides their encounters with service personnel, processes, and physical surroundings (e.g. Fernandes and Krolikowska, 2023; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018). Such customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction leads to value co-creation among customers (Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Rihova et al., 2018). It is indeed a key aspect in the shared and collective experience-centric service industries like sports and leisure events, festivals, and tourism (e.g. Wei et al., 2022; Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Moreover, social connections through service consumption may also integrate customers into longer-term relationships or a broader community of interest, which encourages customers to associate with one another in their life worlds and shapes their future consumption behaviors and experiences (Duffy and Mair, 2021; Rialti et al., 2017). Such extensive connections between customers and other peers are further enhanced with the advancements in digital technology (e.g. Bacile et al., 2020; Ramsey et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, it is a crucial but difficult task for service providers to seize the significance of C2C interaction in value formation within the customer's own contexts and their roles in interactions among customers (Furrer et al., 2024; Heinonen et al., 2018; Martin, 2016).

The extant value co-creation research has dominantly focused on value co-creation between service providers and customers (Dai et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Little work has been done to explicitly address value co-creation through C2C interaction, despite the fact that scholarly investigations have expanded to understand how customers co-create value with other actors in their

service consumption (e.g. Kelleher et al., 2019). Our review of the literature (see Appendix 1) reveals three important issues. First, the empirical research on C2C value co-creation is somewhat limited, and mostly focuses on online communities or service processes (e.g. Bianchi, 2019; Cerdan Chiscano, 2024a; Johnson and Buhalis, 2023). As such, it leaves a gap in our understanding of C2C interaction in the value creation process related to multiple episodes lasting over time within various physical and digital spaces. It is important to obtain a full insight into the customers' domain to comprehensively examine the multi-contextual value formation from C2C interaction. Second, while some studies have examined the collective/inter-subjective aspect of value, how customers undertake joint activities to create value for groups, communities, and society remains under-explored (Heinonen et al. 2018; Uhrich et al., 2024). Finally, while it is important to understand the complex and multifaceted nature of value and the facilitating role of service providers, few studies have empirically examined how providers support C2C value co-creation activities. Therefore, an investigation of C2C value co-creation activities across multiple episodes, both during the service encounters and in customers' lifeworld, and the corresponding strategic actions for providers to become embedded in customers' own social contexts to enhance C2C value co-creation is warranted.

Against this backdrop, the current study aims to develop a customer-dominant framework of value which provides a broad and integrative view of C2C value co-creation both within and beyond the core service encounters with its specific benefits and types of service providers' involvement. A customer-dominant (C-D) logic lens will be adopted, which positions customers in the center of interest and focuses on what customers are doing with services (Heinonen et al., 2010). The roles of service providers, indeed, are to support customers to achieve their own goals by thoroughly comprehending customers' activities, practices, experiences, and contexts (Zinelabidine et al., 2018). Such a lens also takes into account the temporal and contextual aspects of value formation and views value as socially constructed involving other actors in customers' life and ecosystem (Heinonen et al., 2013).

Running events were chosen as the empirical context since they enable an investigation of a wide range of interactions among customers in both the joint sphere where customers come into the provider's physical and digital spaces to co-create value with other customers and the customer sphere which captures customers' self-activities (Grönroos and Voima, 2013). Further research on C2C value co-creation in sporting events is also practically significant in light of the recent development of these share and collective consumption contexts (Ribeiro et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2019).

The study makes several pivotal contributions. First, consistent with the C-D logic, the study showcases a more nuanced view of how value emerges involving multiple spatial and temporal points of reference, not just the traditional touchpoints within providers' settings or virtual communities

(Bianchi, 2019; Nicholls, 2024). It represents the multifaceted nature of value co-creation through C2C interaction that incorporates multiple contextual realities in customers' lives. Second, the study enhances the understanding of C2C value co-creation outcomes. Whereas prior literature predominantly examines benefits for individual customers (Heinonen et al. 2018; Zhang et al., 2023), we find that C2C co-creation can bring benefits for groups, communities, and society at large. The findings thus contribute to the C-D logic literature on the collective value unit for groups, communities, and society and advance the understanding of social value formation (Heinonen et al., 2010), responding to the call for more marketing and service research that addresses societal issues and makes a positive impact on the world (Uhrich et al., 2024). Third, the study specifies the different types of the provider's involvement (e.g. platform-based and presence-based involvement), which contributes to the understanding of the provider's roles corresponding to the C-D logic perspective. Finally, it provides service practitioners with a strategic framework including practical guidelines to support C2C value co-creation activities, which could be applicable not only to the event and festival sector but also to other socially dense consumption contexts. This aligns with the calls for service providers to place C2C value co-creation more centrally within their strategic vision (Furrer et al., 2024).

4.3 Literature review

4.3.1 Conceptualizations of value and C2C value co-creation

Value generally refers to "an emergent, positively or negatively valenced change in the well-being or viability of a particular system/actor" (Akaka et al., 2021, p. 11). It is a central concept in the marketing literature as value links to satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately to business performance and well-being (Zeithaml et al., 2020). A traditional view of value suggests value is embedded in the provider's outputs, created within the provider's back-office activities, and delivered to customers for their usage (Anker et al., 2015; Grönroos and Voima, 2013). The focus has recently been shifted to value creation via interactions between customers and providers (and possibly other actors), and value is thus co-created through integrating mutual resources into value configuration (Carvalho and Alves, 2023; Lazarus et al., 2014; Ling-Yee Li et al., 2017; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). In this regard, value is determined "in use" and value creation is customers' creation of value-in-use via their usage of resources (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2014). McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) suggest that, through a set of cognitive and behavioral activities in interactions with actors in their service network, customers co-create value.

Value is both individually and socially constructed (Helkkula et al., 2012), and value can emerge beyond customers' experiences of provider-created elements (Heinonen et al., 2013). Hence, the emphasis has shifted from highlighting interactions between providers and customers to emphasizing customers as the primary stakeholders and their lives and ecosystem (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Uhrich et al., 2024). Consequently, interactions between customers or customer collectives, or C2C value co-creation, has become a significant field of study (Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Saxena et al., 2024). Consistent with Harkison (2018) and McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012), this paper refers to C2C value co-creation as benefits realized from resource integration through interactions and activities with other customers in a given social context. Accordingly, interactions represent the ways customers engage with other customers, and C2C value co-creation activities are depicted as cognitive and behavioral activities to integrate resources executed by customers and driven by expected benefits (Sweeney et al. 2015). Beneficiaries of such interactions and collective activities may include the individual customers (Pandey and Kumar, 2020), customer groups (Finsterwalder and Kuppelweiser, 2011), the community (Carù and Cova, 2015), and the society (Heinonen et al., 2018; Uhrich et al., 2024). Our review of the literature (Appendix 1) shows that though the collective/inter-subjective aspect of value has been examined in some studies, how customers undertake joint activities to create value for groups, communities, and society remains under-explored (Heinonen et al. 2018; Uhrich et al., 2024). Therefore, we postulate that attention should be given to benefits for individuals, groups, communities, and even society.

4.3.2 C2C value co-creation domains

Value co-creation generally occurs in three main domains (Grönroos and Voima, 2013), including the provider sphere, the joint sphere, and the customer sphere. Consistent with the research objective, the current study investigates value co-creation in the joint sphere and customer sphere. While customers come into physical and digital contact with providers in the joint sphere to co-create value with other customers, value co-creation among customers in the customer sphere include customers' self-activities. The joint sphere is the traditional focus of value co-creation processes where customers come into contact with the provider and the core consumption activities take place (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Heinonen et al., 2010). While customers maintain the key role in mobilizing resources to co-create value (Hau, 2019), their activities and processes are visible to providers. Thus, providers can preserve flexibility in service provisions. The customer sphere, on the other hand, cannot be directly controlled by providers (Zinelabidine et al., 2018). This is where customers engage in learning, goal setting, reflections on experience and other types of social interactions, which together shape their future behaviors and service experiences (Grönroos and Voima, 2013). As value is formed as the

actions of multiple actors in customers' lives and social ecosystems (Heinonen et al., 2013), it is important to understand how social interactions in the customer sphere contribute to C2C value co-creation.

4.3.3 Customer-dominant logic as a theoretical lens to investigate C2C value co-creation

C-D logic offers a distinct perspective to investigate the relationship between customers and service providers (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Accordingly, C-D logic emphasizes the centrality of the customer's lifeworld and ecosystem context and highlights the customers' primary roles in value creation (Kuuru, 2022; Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022). It also emphasizes the history and future of a particular service and all ongoing customer activities and experiences beyond the specific service (Heinonen et al., 2010). C-D logic suggests that value can be originated in personal experiences and social contexts and processes that involve different actors as parts of a collective and inter-subjective context (i.e. both individually and socially constructed in lived and imaginary value experiences) (Helkkula et al., 2012).

C-D logic has been used to investigate a range of topics, such as value creation, customer experience, C2C interactions, service recovery, customer engagement, brand communication, online communities, and customer activity. Adopting this customer-based approach to service, researchers have highlighted an in-depth insight into customers' activities, practices, experiences, and contexts in their lifeworld. Some studies focused on the individual and subjective dimension associated with brands and services as well as value experiences outside the traditional servicescapes (e.g. Medberg and Heinonen, 2014). Other studies view value as being originated in social contexts and processes that involve different actors as parts of a collective and inter-subjective context (e.g. Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022).

Due to the increasing need for social connectivity in communities and the profusion of socially dense consumption contexts, the important roles of C2C interactions (focal customer's interactions with other customers and collective activities) in value creation within customers' own social contexts have also been evident in some C-D logic-based research. Research on festival contexts indicated that attendees interact with their peers and strangers or are just co-present as part of a larger collective at festival sites, which forms related value outcome (Rihova et al., 2018) and influences intention to attend the festival (Zhang et al., 2019). Through an independent online channel, customers co-create value with each other via inter-customer support following a service failure (Xu et al., 2016). Moreover, the individual and collective aspects of value were explored in online interest communities (Johnson and Buhalis, 2023), in which individual value emerges from an individual's experience of provider/service or an individual's idiosyncratic activities and experiences based on content created

by other members while collective value formed from interactions between members via firm-led activities or the actions and behaviors of other members (Heinonen et al., 2019).

While previous studies have dealt with value co-created in customers' own social contexts, they are confined either during service consumption or on online communication channels (e.g. Cerdan Chiscano, 2024a; Heinonen et al., 2019). The temporal and spatial scope of the conception of value should be expanded to include multiple episodes, both inside service encounters and the customers' lifeworld. It is important to obtain a full insight into the customers' domain, such as their ongoing activities outside the service experience, social relationships and connections.

4.3.4 Service providers' roles in C2C value co-creation

While C-D logic posits that customers may interact with other actors, especially other customers, within their own life contexts, over which service providers have little control (Cerdan Chiscano, 2024a) or capacity to shape their value experiences (Heinonen et al., 2019; Kuuru, 2022), it does not completely rule out the role of service providers; instead, they should take a broader role to support customers' value creation (Heinonen et al., 2013). Providers should go beyond their specific services and activities, with a customer centrality on customers' activities, practices, experiences, and lives in order to support customers in generating meanings and solving customers' life issues (Heinonen et al., 2010). They should prioritize customer-related elements and facilitate their goal attainments (Heinonen, 2018; Seppänen et al., 2017). Importantly, they need to adopt a broader time frame by considering customers' past, present, and future experiences, and even customers' different social contexts where those experiences evolve (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Rihova et al., 2015). Providers should recognize the multifaceted nature of value creation, which is a complex multi-contextual process, with a multi-subjective and collective nature. In that sense, providers may facilitate connections between customers' collective life sphere and dynamic social communities (Heinonen et al., 2013). In short, providers need to learn about customers' activities, practices, experiences and lives that services are related to so that they can get involved in customers' experiences and lives (Heinonen et al., 2010; Zinelabidine et al., 2018). While it is necessary to understand the complex and multifaceted nature of value and the facilitating role of providers, not many studies empirically explore how service providers get involved in supporting customers' value-creating activities through the C-D logic perspective. This gap will also be addressed in the current study.

4.4 Methods

The study seeks to offer a broad and integrative view of C2C value co-creation both within and beyond the core service encounters, along with its specific benefits and types of service providers' involvement. This is done by linking the evidence of naturally occurring actions and the views of runners themselves into a credible account of runners' C2C value co-creation activities. Consequently, a qualitative approach was employed as it is appropriate for the exploratory and interpretative nature of the study (Gephart, 2004), is consistent with Grönroos and Voima's (2013) suggestion to obtain a more holistic understanding of customers' logic and ecosystem, is in line with prior C2C value co-creation research (Reichenberger, 2017; Torres et al., 2018), and enables triangulation (Yin, 2009). The current study was guided by an abductive view highlighting the iterative and interpretive approach between theoretical knowledge and empirical data to extend understanding of theory and empirical phenomenon and was particularly suitable for theory development (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Patton, 2002). In this vein, certain theoretical preconceptions guide the researcher and empirical data guides unanticipated aspects.

While C2C interactions are relatively limited in contexts such as financial, legal and health care services, C2C interaction is an integral component of the customer's experience in service contexts such as festival and sports events (Chen, 2023; Uhrich et al., 2024). Running events hosted by event organizations selling Bibs (i.e. entrance tickets) for attendants were chosen as the empirical context due to several reasons. First, it underscores all seven attributes of C2C interaction-intense contexts suggested by Martin and Pranter (1989), including physical proximity among customers leading to influence by behaviors of other customers, a mix of heterogeneous customers, customers sharing time, space, or service instruments with each other, and the compatibility of the core service to aggregate and strengthen congruent relationships between customers, the potential for verbal communication between customers, customers participating in various activities, and customers occasionally waiting for service. Customers are from different demographic backgrounds, and they may join the events alone, with groups (e.g. friends, families, coworkers). Due to differences in objectives and motivations, runners may join to take the core races or involve in a number of additional socially interactive activities (e.g. concerts and lucky-draw). Further, such events usually last a long time and event sites are designed with functional and recreational areas, which enable customers to engage in conversations with their group members as well as strangers as they simultaneously share time, space, and service with each other. Second, in this context, customers' value experience may not match with service providers' value propositions. Customers not only perceive functional or symbolic value from the events (e.g. gain a healthier lifestyle, show off personal records with friends) (Tynan et al., 2014) but also get other types of value due to contacts and bonds

with each other. Finally, customers not only interact with one another at the events but also sustain connections with their counterparts beyond the consumption experience, both online and offline.

4.4.1 Data collection

A multi-method approach was employed. Data were collected from participant observations during running events, in-depth interviews with selected runners, and netnography on running communities' Facebook pages and official Facebook pages managed by event organizers. This strategy facilitates triangulations (Zinelabidine et al., 2018).

It is essential to approach a wide range of running events offering a variety of C2C value co-creation activities. A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted to investigate rich cases of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). One author had discussions with two senior staff organizing running events in Vietnam and three regular event attendees to obtain preliminary insights. Running event websites were screened to identify potential study sites and then assessed in terms of event type, scale, time and location, target attendees and running distance. Consequently, five running events were chosen, as reflected in the following pseudonyms: FunRun, MovementRun, TrailRun, LocalRun and InterRun. These events were diversified in terms of event type (entertainment, charity, challenge, experience, and internationally certificated races), scale (4,500 to 15,000 participants), duration (half-a-day to three days), location (urban and highland venues), target attendees (e.g. young attendees, families, professional runners) and racing distance (e.g. 5KM, 10KM, 21KM, and 42KM).

A researcher participated in the five running events, immersing himself in the experience as a runner, to gather observational data. This method of observing customer behavior in its natural environment offers the advantage of being non-intrusive and avoid potential biases that could arise from interviews (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2011). A prior devised observation guide was used to ensure comprehensive and accurate coverage of explicit aspects constituting C2C co-creation at events were captured, which focused on uncovering socio-cultural, spatial, and temporal settings of interpersonal activities, sorts and patterns of visible behaviors and interactions (both deliberate and mundane), actors engaging in interactions, executed social rules and norms, and characteristics of physical spaces.

In order to illuminate the interactive situations at events and the social connections in runners' lives, observational data were then complemented with in-depth interviews. This comprehensive approach enabled a thorough understanding of customers' behaviors and experience (Nicholls & Gad Mohsen, 2019). Interview respondents were selected through the authors' social network. Purposive sampling was used for recruiting interviewees who attended at least one of the five events and engaged in discussion on running groups/communities' Facebook pages and official events' Facebook pages. In total, 17 runners were interviewed (see Table 4.1). Interviewees were diverse in terms of

gender, age group, occupation, and familiarity with running events. Some of them were individual runners, while others joined the events in groups of friends, coworkers, family members, or running teams.

Table 4.1 Interviewees' characteristics

Code	Gender	Age group	Job	Attendance at events	Attendance group
ID01	Male	25-29	Event executive	3-10 times	Company running group
ID02	Female	35-39	Freelance	3-10 times	Family
ID03	Male	25-29	Salesman	3-10 times	Running team
ID04	Female	30-34	Planning staff	3-10 times	Friend group
ID05	Female	25-29	Production staff	1-2 times	Friend group
ID06	Female	<25	Beauty consultant	3-10 times	Company running group
ID07	Female	25-29	HR staff	1-2 times	Friend group
ID08	Male	30-34	IT Engineer	>10 times	Running team
ID09	Male	25-29	Programmer	1-2 times	Company running group
ID10	Female	30-34	Manufacturing engineer	>10 times	Running team
ID11	Female	35-39	Manager	>10 times	Friend group
ID12	Male	40-44	Salesman	3-10 times	Individual
ID13	Male	45-49	Entrepreneur	>10 times	Running team
ID14	Male	40-44	Manufacturing engineer	>10 times	Running team
ID15	Male	35-39	HR staff	>10 times	Family
ID16	Male	>50	Freelance	3-10 times	Individual
ID17	Male	<25	Student	3-10 times	Friend group

Interviews followed a semi-structured format. Interviewees were asked to recall the last event involving interpersonal activities they experienced. The researcher then probed for further information related to particular social interactions and collective activities by asking respondents to share about the resources (skills, knowledge) impacting their interactive activities, their explanations of implicit or explicit norms in interactive situations, their experiences of interactive activities, their mental activities in indirect interactions with acquainted and unacquainted runners, and C2C social encounters in their everyday life. Interviews lasted 50 to 90 minutes.

In the contemporary digital landscape where customers are increasingly interact with each other via the internet, online communities have become valuable source of information about consumers. Netnography, with its ability to provide rich and naturalistic data, has become a useful method to

understand the lived realities of customers and consumption-related experiences (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018). Therefore, data for the current study were also collected from discussions on online communities to gain insights on how virtual and physical spaces were interconnected in runners' lives. Five official Facebook pages of the studied events and four Facebook pages operated by the running communities were observed. Following Kozinets's (2015) method of observing users' online behaviors and exchanges, the authors focused on a wide variety of topics including common C2C value co-creation activities of individual runners and communities, pre-event planning and preparation, coordination of activities, and post-event sharing.

4.4.2 Data analysis

The empirical data including the electronically recorded and verbatim transcribed interviews and observation notes were coded by one author and a colleague who is fluent in both Vietnamese and English. Another author examined the coding for rationality and logic and also acted as a sounding board. The scholars worked closely together with regular conversations during the coding process. The data were gathered in Vietnamese and translated into English only in the final step to avoid distortions of meanings (Suh et al., 2009). The analysis and interpretative phases followed the theoretical thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and focused on fundamental questions such as how runners interact with other peers during service encounters or within their own life contexts, what benefits come with such interactions, and how runners' interactions with each other involve service providers. Themes were developed following the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). We moved back and forth iteratively between theoretical knowledge and the data set to continually review new codes and emerging themes to ensure the themes' coherence and validity (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A multi-stage, systematic process employed to analyze and interpret the data comprised the steps generally depicted as follows.

First, in order to attain an immersion in and familiarization with the data, all text materials were thoroughly read several times to spot preliminary impressions, which led to initial codes being identified (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). For instance, interactions may be limited to individuals' perceptions and observations of other runners' expressions and behaviors, or simple encounters between runners such as getting a chit-chat with another runner. Alternatively, interactions can occur when runners jointly participate in collective activities of running groups or communities. Initial codes were then generated to capture the facts from the informants' viewpoints and empirical observations (Van Maanen, 1979) via an open coding process (Gioia et al., 2013). In this stage, all data were assigned to the relevant codes. Next, we searched for the similarities of the first-order codes and collated the codes that were closely related into the second-order codes. Therefore, it ensured the categories were

distinct but coherent and reflected the evolving meanings and interpretations (Gioia et al., 2013). For example, the preliminary codes including “respond to matters of event-related processes” and “answer to concerns with rules at events” both highlighted that runners offer general information about events to other runners. Thus, these codes were classified into the “provide basic information” second-order code. The second-order codes were then reviewed to check if they worked in relation to the first-order codes and a similar procedure of coding was used for identifying higher-order themes. For instance, “plan group experiences” and “deploy group actions” were subsequently grouped into the “preparing” theme. From there, we developed clear definitions and names for each theme. Finally, we re-examined the data to gain an understanding of the relationships among categories and gathered quotes that represented the identified themes. The back-and-forth iteration between empirical and theoretical insights led to a refining of codes and the generation of abstract higher-level themes (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). In order to reach a consensus, we also engaged in multiple rounds of discussion to resolve disagreements and confirm interpretations. The codes and themes are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Summary of the coding results

First-order codes	Second-order codes	Themes	Definition
• Respond to matters of event-related processes • Answer to concerns with rules at events • Provide suggestions for preparing for events • Offer practical details to join particular activities during events	• Provide basic information • Give guidance	Informing	Attendees shared general information and instructions on the online discussion board to other attendees on how they could do the right things, which facilitated other attendees' own behaviors.
• Members discuss information about the event • Members arrange schedules and schemes • Members execute delegated tasks • Members conduct training practice	• Plan group experiences • Deploy group actions	Preparing	Runners engaged in multiple activities with their in-group members across physical and virtual spaces before the events, which shaped group consumption experiences at the events.
• Recognize the shouts from other attendees • Recognize the claps from other attendees • Feel the excitement of other attendees • Feel the enthusiasm of other attendees	• Perceive behaviors • Associate with emotional expressions	Attaching	Attendees' experiences were affected by how they perceived and interpreted other runners' expressions and behaviors during the celebration at the finish line, which resulted in emotional arousal for attendees.
• Introduce some personal information • Communicate briefly about general topics • Express the greetings by saying hi or hello • Reveal body language by smiling or making eye contact	• Chat with other attendees • Welcome other attendees	Communing	Attendees engaged in brief and friendly talks or contacts with strangers in a friendly and cheerful environment. This activity brought individuals closer together.

• Approach and have long dialogues with old friends • Set a meeting for additional discussion • Meet and have open exchanges with new people • Exchange contact details for more connection	• Meet up with acquaintances • Make new friends	Expanding	Attendees participated in open, prolonged conversations with other runners at functional areas of the events, which enhanced further subsequent interactions.
• Members run together and engage in entertainment with their group • Members run together and join competitions from the group challenge • Members mark milestones of each other • Members help each other to keep pace and motivation	• Accompany together • Support each other	Companioning	Attendees ran alongside their in-group members or gave each other support during the race. This activity led to a strong sense of camaraderie among members.
• Members carry out the greeting celebration • Members execute the cheering protocol • Members dress in the group uniform • Member perform the own actions of their group	• Perform group rituals • Conform group rules	Disseminating	Group members conducted conventional activities or followed group rules, which was encouraged by special proposals at the events. This gave outsiders a positive impression of running groups.
• The crowd of attendees dances and sings • The crowd of attendees joins fun games • The crowd of attendees takes collective selfies • The crowd of attendees has the intimating contacts	• Play together • Melt together	Entwining	Crowds of attendees, immersed in entertaining parties, such as music concerts, spontaneously engaged in collective performance and merged into a collective, transcending everyday social rules and boundaries.

• The crowd of attendees gives inspiring words to one another • The crowd of attendees whistles or roars • The crowd of attendees gives direct motivation to each other through high fives or fist bumps • The crowd of attendees applauds or beats the cheering balls	• Conduct the oral inspiration • Give nonverbal motivation	Inspiring	Attendees in crowds inspired each other during the race by engaging in collective acts of kindness and support, such as cheering and shouting. This is done under the staff' and crowds of attendees' stimulation.
• The crowd of attendees wears the event costume • The crowd of attendees expresses the event-symbolic objects • The crowd of attendees cosplays special characters • The crowd of attendees performs special actions	• Join organizer-planned special themes • Participate in creative contests	Publicizing	Crowds of attendees displayed symbolic objects, specific actions, or special clothing items to adhere to specific norms and rules at the event (e.g. dressing in the event T-shirts) or in a creative way (e.g. wearing self-made cosplay costumes). This activity helps spread meaningful messages to the public.
• Post symbolic items (medals or Bibs) from the event • Display photos captured at the event • Tell the personal record and accomplishments from the event • Post a review of the event experience	• Share proofs of attendance • Share stories from events	Showing	Runners used social media to showcase their accomplishments, sharing photos, race bibs, medals, personal records, and experiences. This self-promotional activity helped them gain recognition from their peers and build their performance-based reputation.

• Running communities' participants create posts sharing photos or racing results • Running communities' participants tag peers' names on posts of photos or racing results • Running communities' participants partake in a chit-chat of photos • Running communities' participants discuss racing results	• Direct collectives' attention to event-related objects • Join collective conversations	Prolonging	Crowds of runners engaged in online discussions on pages of running-communities, discussing interesting photos taken during the events and race results of others. This activity helped extending post-event experience and activities for community members.
• View notifications (the training schedules or workshops) • Read recreational threads • Track practical guidance of running matters (exercises or treatment of injuries) • Track posts sharing the running experience	• Search general content • Monitor posts of professionals	Following	Individuals followed the social media posts of other runners in order to obtain knowledge, information, helpful insights, inspiration, and enjoyment. This advanced the followers' passion, expertise, and skills as well as made their everyday running exercise better.
• Contact to perform the regular run • Contact to perform the occasional run • Share running activities • Share life matters	• Involve in other peers' running practice • Exchange common interests	Connecting	Runners associated with like-minded people in their daily running routine, which brought companions who could understand and share their running lifestyles and related experiences.
• Members participate in a call to practice together • Members join the group running game	• Run together	Cultivating	Members maintained group running routines and shared daily running activities on the group's online discussion

• Members share the group training journey • Members report details of running results	• Post the running activities		platforms, which was promoted by related events in life.
• Running communities' participants offer running books • Running communities' participants offer running articles • Running communities' participants show training instructions • Running communities' participants give tips	• Provide references • Share practical understandings	Contributing	Participants of the running communities jointly shared knowledge, skills, and tips through the communities' online platforms, which added social capital to the running communities.
• The crowd of runners partake in community runs • The crowd of runners participate in open workshops • The crowd of runners post the running routes • The crowd of runners share stories of running	• Join public activities • Convey narratives in running	Promoting	Crowds of runners participated in community activities or spread running narratives offered in related events in their life. This activity advanced a trend of running.
• Running communities' participants run to raise funds for children in need • Running communities' participants run to raise funds for underprivileged people • Running communities' participants run to raise funds for growing green trees • Running communities' participants run to raise funds for constructing community houses	• Run to support individuals • Run to support the environment and society	Combining	Running communities' participants engaged in charitable endeavors in addition to running, which gave running a deeper meaning and allowed them to positively impact society.

4.5 Results

The findings reveal that C2C value co-creation occurs in service encounters (i.e. the joint sphere) in which attendees interact with each other within physical and digital environments run by service providers and the attendees' own life contexts (i.e. the customer sphere) where interactions among attendees are beyond the direct influential possibility and the line of visibility of service providers. Accordingly, eighteen C2C value co-creation activities were identified, which follows a sequence of four stages, as shown in Figure 4.1: (1) preparation for the experience (pre-event), (2) on-site experience (during the event), (3) fulfillment of the experience (post-event), and (4) sustaining running activities (daily life).

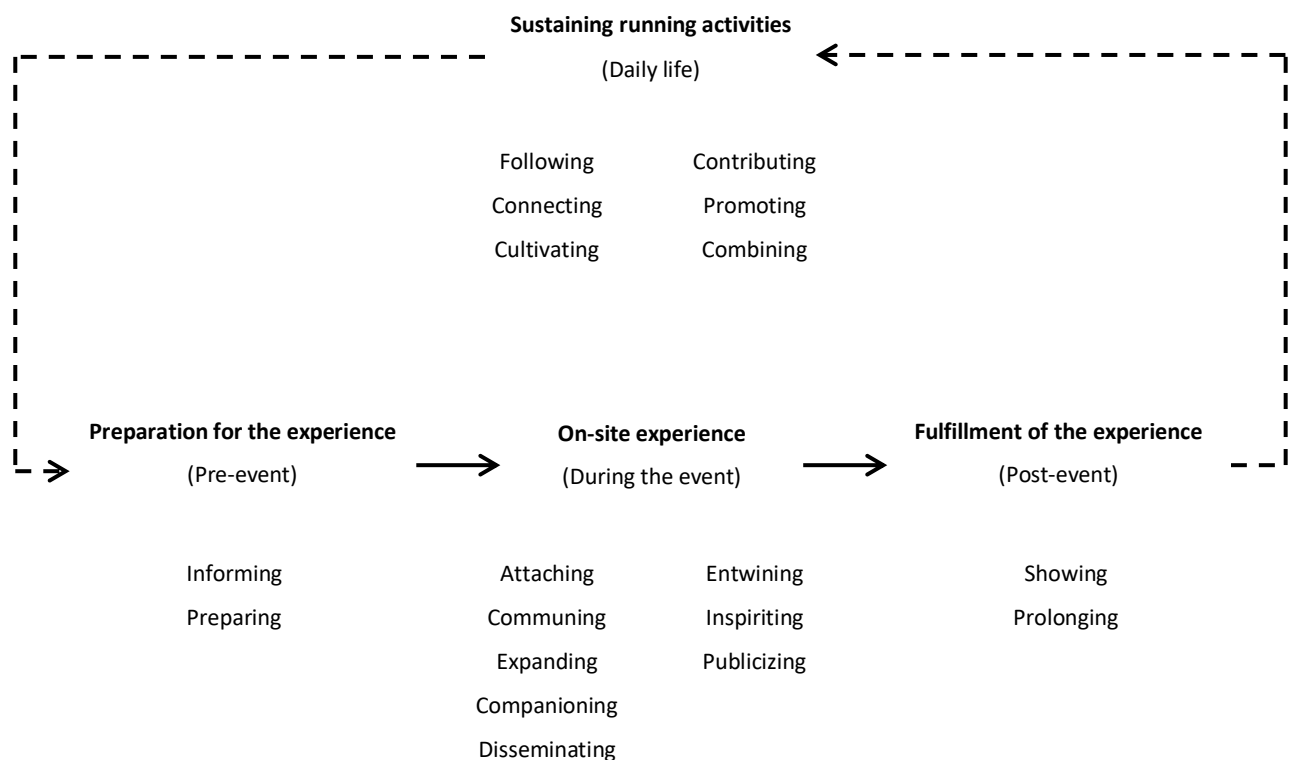


Figure 4.1 A sequence of C2C value co-creation activities

It should be noted that central to this study is an understanding of the multifaceted nature of value formation. As we did not attempt to identify every C2C value co-creation activity, the list is not meant to be exhaustive. Table 4.3 summarizes the eighteen C2C value co-creation activities, the corresponding benefits derived from these activities, the involvement of service providers in such activities, as well as the potential outcomes for service providers. The following section provides details about C2C value co-creation during the four stages, supported by representative evidence from our data.

Table 4.3 C2C value co-creation activities

Activities	Benefits derived from the activity	How service providers get involved	Potential outcomes for service providers
Preparation for the experience (pre-event)			
Informing	Fulfilling Individuals' information needs	Organizing a side activity, e.g. the online exchange	Customer engagement in online event pages
Preparing	Pursuing the group's shared interests and achieving the group's goals	Providing supplementary resources, e.g. information	Positive on-site experience
On-site experience (during the event)			
Attaching	Bringing individuals positive feelings	Designing a main program, e.g. the finish line celebration	Customer satisfaction with on-site experience
Communing	Intensifying individuals' social connections	Aligning the servicescape aspect, e.g. ambient condition	Customer satisfaction with on-site experience
Expanding	Developing an individual's peer relationships	Aligning the servicescape aspect, e.g. spatial layout and functionality	Customer intention to revisit
Companioning	Fostering the group's local tie	Designing main programs, e.g. the racing routes	Customer satisfaction with on-site experience
Disseminating	Promoting groups' identity	Putting forward special proposals, e.g. discounts and spaces for groups	Customer satisfaction with on-site experience
Entwining	Enhancing the collective connectedness in temporary communities of the event	Organizing side activities, e.g. the music concerts	Customer intention to revisit
Inspiring	Elevating the positive social atmosphere in temporary communities of the event	Aligning the servicescape elements, e.g. staff and people	Customer citizenship behavior

Publicizing	Raising public awareness of social issues	Designing a main program, e.g. a unique themed participation Putting forward a special proposal, e.g. a costume run	Positive perception of the event's image
Fulfillment of the experience (post-event)			
Showing	Reinforcing individuals' social status	Providing supplementary resources, e.g. Bibs, medals, photos, or racing results	Positive word-of-mouth, re-patronage intention
Prolonging	Enriching a community culture of discussion	Providing supplementary resources, e.g. photos or racing results	Customer loyalty and advocacy
Sustaining running activities (daily life)			
Following	Gaining individuals' self-development	Non involvement	Customer intention to revisit
Connecting	Strengthening individuals' running activities and related experiences	Non involvement	Customer intention to revisit
Cultivating	Forming group rituals	Fostering a related event, e.g. virtual family race	Customer intention to revisit
Contributing	Developing a sustainable community	Non involvement	Customer intention to revisit
Promoting	Establishing a healthy and active lifestyle	Fostering a related event, e.g. the community run	Positive perception of the organizers' image
Combining	Fostering social welfare	Sponsoring	Positive perception of the organizers' image

4.5.1 Preparation for the experience (pre-event)

Before attending events, runners typically undertake informing and preparing activities. Accordingly, they exchange information to prepare for their participation, and group members also collaborate to plan their group experience. For example, they could use an event's fan page to exchange information for planning their visit, including the running routes, themes, and group activities. This might create a sense of familiarity and belonging, making them feel more confident about participating in a variety of C2C value co-creation activities in the subsequent stage.

Social media (e.g. Facebook) functioned as an outlet for runners' participation in provider-hosted side activities such as games or discussion boards, as well as enabling service providers to communicate general content about running and the events. For example, ID01 reported how Fan-pages were typically operated: *"Event pages often provide participants with basic information about the events (e.g. routes, registration methods, and preparation tips for attendees). Furthermore, participants might bring up issues related to the events, like where they can park their vehicles. The organizers will post those queries, and anybody can leave comments for one another"*. Besides, talks between attendees were observed on Fan-page of TrailRun: *"Participant 1: Is it compulsory to wear the event's tank top when running? I do not like it. Participant 2: You do not need to put on that tank top"*. In these instances, attendees obviously received information and guidance from other peers to enhance their own behaviors. This is called **informing** activity, which fulfilled individuals' information needs and took place within the online exchange, a side activity mainly controlled and organized by service providers through, for example, providing topics for conversation and a commenting/reviewing function. The more actively customers participate and contribute resources in the events' fan pages, the more engaged they become in those pages.

In order to attend running events together, in-group members *"announced the coming event"* (ID15) and *"asked if anyone would like to join and register as a group to get a discount"* (ID17). They then spent time getting together both in person and virtually to *"exchange general information about the event"* (ID13) and *"discuss how to get to the event site and what to do at the event"* (ID04). In fact, running groups engaged in a variety of activities in both physical and virtual spaces to collaboratively construct their consumption experiences and prepare for group activities at the events. One respondent described how his group prepared for the event: *"My group would get together for a meeting before each event to discuss things like how to get there, who gets the bibs, how to practice, and how to run correctly and divide up the strength for the entire run. Everyone gathered at the company cafeteria and created a training plan (e.g. a running schedule for Mon/Wed/Fri and the types of exercises). After that, we practiced together"* (ID01). Additionally, ID11 mentioned that her group ran together in preparation for the upcoming race: *"I also trained with them before the race, and we*

gathered offline a few times to run together". These statements illustrated a C2C value co-creation activity in which runners jointly prepare in advance to shape group experiences during the event. This **preparing** activity assisted groups in pursuing their shared interests and achieving their goals, and could be facilitated by the presence of service providers in the form of offering supplementary resources (e.g. information). Such preparation provides important resources for groups' positive experience at the event.

4.5.2 On-site experience (during the event)

The pre-event activities discussed above helped attendees feel prepared and more confident to engage in a wide range of C2C value co-creation activities during the event. The data reveals several important on-site activities, encompassing the focal customer's interactions with other customers (attaching, communing, and expanding activities), in-group members' engagement in the group's activities (companioning and disseminating activities), and crowds of customers' participation in communal activities (entwining, inspiring, and publicizing activities).

One common observation from all the events was crowds of attendees congregating on the sidelines and at the finish line for celebration through cheering other runners who were close to complete the race. Such a designed main program brought up the motivating atmosphere of the running events, which positively influenced individuals' mental and emotional experiences. This was evidence as respondents shared about the emotional arousal they experienced at events. For example, ID07 said: *"As I approached the finish line, other attendees had already gathered there, applauded and shouted. Although I was drained, they lifted my spirit up and I was inspired to strive to accomplish my own goal"*. ID10 further said: *"When approaching the last few miles, my body was so exhausted, and the spiritual power became really important. I heard cheers from other attendees on both sides of the racetrack near the finish line: 'Come on, you're almost there, just a few more steps' [...] This made me feel more energized and delighted, as if I were about to accomplish something big"*. C2C value co-creation activity here related to individuals' attaching activity to other attendees' expressions and behaviors. The **attaching** activity led to positive feelings of individuals (e.g. pleasure and excitement) and originated from the finish line celebration, a main program as a platform staged by service providers. Such positive feelings tend to enhance customer satisfaction and their positive evaluations of the overall service experience.

Running events were inherently social occasions tailored specifically to maximize opportunities for interactions between attendees, more than just participating in sporting activities. Indeed, respondents also highlighted ambient conditions of running events as background environmental stimuli that drove their fleeting and friendly encounters with one another: *"Here, the relaxed,*

*boundary-free environment made it easy to for me to smile and chitchat with other attendees [...] Because the event area was outdoors and surrounded by parks, lakes, and lawns, interactions with other runners were facilitated” (ID04). “Cheerleaders roused participants and music was played nonstop during the event so the lively atmosphere was maintained [...] The powerful vocal coupled with the upbeat music motivated us to socialize with each other” (ID05). As these statements illustrated, aligned ambient conditions including visual and auditory elements (e.g. the park and music) contributed to the physical aspect of the servicescape as a platform, which fostered transient and casual talk between attendees. Another respondent delineated further how she encountered with strangers: “I had quick conversations with a few people, asking which running team they belonged to or what their goals were. It was just socializing. I usually communed with anyone next to me. In such a big crowd, small talk brought people together [...] A few words of socializing, greeting, or cheering each other. Anyone in that cheerful and nice atmosphere would do the same” (ID07). Accordingly, this **communing** activity was stimulated by service providers, and helped intensifying individuals’ social connections with other runners. “Such brief interactions were important to create social connections. Running events that fulfill these basic needs tend to elicit positive emotional responses from participants, influencing their overall evaluation of them event and experience. Personally, I believe these aspects are important, like everyone contributing a little to create a complete and fulfilling experience” (ID08).*

Furthermore, the functional design and spatial arrangement provided public spaces where participants may congregate and freely interact with each other, such as “*artificial turf*”, as indicated by ID16, and “*recovering hub*”, as indicated by ID12. Respondents also recalled: “*I spotted an acquaintance on the racetrack and waited for him to congregate at the photo booth. We then took commemorative photos and discussed about the race. We talked quite a lot [...] Given our same interests, we easily exchanged information about events and side activities. We still kept in touch after the event to discuss more about the experience we had at the event*” (ID01), and “*I interacted with another attendee at the recovering hub. I started the conversation by asking him some personal information (e.g. where he came from, the distance he had completed, or which upcoming races he planned to attend) [...] I also suggested a few well-known running groups for him to join and practice, or the pages of running groups that provide the most comprehensive running information*” (ID08). In this sense, an individual’s exchange with other runners was not just superficial (e.g. accidentally meeting and talking for a little while). Such exchanges could be expanded into longer discussions on a range of topics with other attendees who could relate to and understand their experiences, as well as additional interactions outside of the event. As a result, this **expanding** activity was a C2C value co-creation activity, which was facilitated by the functional design and spatial arrangement, the physical

aspect of the servicescape as a platform arranged by service providers, which helped develop individuals' peer relationships. Such peer relationship formed during the event may encourage people to come back in the future, as one respondent said: *"When I meet someone who shares the same passion for running and we happen to have a good connection, I will ask for their contact information so we can join future races together ... It's like when you meet people who share your interests, it's very easy to make friends. Because we have the same interests, we have a lot in common to talk about, or even invite them to join a running group together"* (ID10).

Running events were especially appropriate to afford attendee groups (e.g. friends, families, and colleagues) a chance to engage in their groups' own activities. A typical field note from LocalRun revealed: *"There was a 5 km running route mainly designed for families, where grandparents, parents, and kids ran together. They all appeared to be having a great time while running. Members occasionally chuckled and offered each other tons of support by high-fiving and saying things like, 'Good job!' or 'Come on, you can finish the race!'"*. Similarly, respondents spoke of their groups' experiences: *"The event program includes many races that require the solidarity and participation of group members. I feel that by participating, my team gets closer together"* (ID03), and *"Our group made stops at several stations along the race to take photos of the milestones and record our achievements. The group also had some quite unique photos, for example, one of them showed members lying down on the racetrack to form a circle"* (ID04). Here, the C2C value co-creation activity was the **companioning** activity, which was conducted in the races, the main programs as platforms staged by service providers. Furthermore, in-group members enjoyed spending quality time together during the races, and such companionship during the races was great for establishing a strong sense of camaraderie and strengthening the groups' local ties. These positive interactions could contribute to a sense of fulfillment, greater enjoyment, and satisfaction with the experience.

Through social media (e.g. Facebook), organizers also put forward special proposals with potential benefits for attendee groups to call for participation in the running event. As observed on the Fan-page of LocalRun: *"For teams like companies and running groups, the marathon program is a fantastic way to improve members' physical and mental health while also strengthening the team's image and spirit. Please review the information in the link and email us to register for a group at the best Tier 1 ticket pricing for this event"*. In fact, respondents explained that groups typically conducted conventional activities or followed group rules, giving outsiders a unique impression of the group. For instance, *"Looking at other attendees, I recognized that some were from one group and some were from another. That was good [...] People went together in large groups with a strong team spirit, which allowed them to perform group activities like holding and waving group flags or dancing. I found that really interesting"* (ID05), and *"Some groups wore group uniforms or warmed up together. I spotted*

the ViNarunner group running together, wearing a very cute uniform, and holding up cheering signs [...] The way the teams had performed had truly impressed me” (ID09). These examples illustrate that, on the basis of providers’ offers for group participation, group members actively shaped their own group experiences together. In that sense, visits to running events served as a focal point for groups to promote groups’ identities via a **disseminating** activity, which was motivated by special proposals from service providers. When groups have opportunities to showcase their identity (through uniforms, cheers, flags, banners), it reinforces their sense of belonging, leading to positive evaluations of the event: *“Before the run, our group gathered and warmed up together. Because we’re a semi-professional running group, we had our own uniform, a black shirt with the group’s name written in white on the back. It was really exciting and fun because there were many other groups participating in the event and they also had their own unique uniforms” (ID10).*

In addition to mass participation marathons, running events included recreational and celebratory elements that drew large crowds of people to participate in communal leisure activities in entertaining and pleasant environments. Thousands of runners immersed themselves in the music concert with each other, as observed at FunRun: *“Following the race, crowds gathered near the main stage. Everyone began singing together, laughing, and dancing along to the upbeat music that was playing. Meanwhile, large balls were hurled from the stage, and the crowds tried to hit them back and forth towards other attendees. Every time someone used a cell phone to film a video or take a selfie during the concert, others nearby tried to quickly get in the picture”.* Likewise, respondents highlighted fun and enjoyment throughout music performances: *“Although I did not know who they were, they looked very cheerful and turned around to dance with me and we took selfies together. When someone’s cell phone was raised and I saw myself in the frame, I also smiled and posed” (ID02), and “Runners could have beer and dance together during a music show [...] Some had very funny and weird dance moves. It was really exciting since the runners played with such enthusiasm [...] Following a long run, everyone enjoyed the lively music and engaging in fun activities with one another at the music party, which strengthened the bonds of togetherness.” (ID03).* Such evidences demonstrated that attendees escaped themselves from everyday life to play together and merge into a collective without social boundaries and differences (e.g. gender, age, and social class). Here, the C2C value co-creation activity was **entwining** activity, which contributed to the collective connectedness in temporary communities of the events and occurred in music concerts, one of the side activities as platforms organized by service providers. That *“sense of community among participants encourages people to come back. It’s a place where many people could interact, from rich to poor, young to old, and you get to immerse yourself in the collective atmosphere and enjoy the activities that you don’t experience in everyday life” (ID02).*

Attendees' participation in communal activities at events was also significantly influenced by social stimuli, as a typical field note from FunRun indicated: *"Before running, the MC and volunteers fired everyone up and shouted to attract and make them join crowds of attendees. These strangers then gradually mixed into crowds and also pulled more and more other runners [...] As volunteers always expressed friendliness, gave runners smiles and high fives, and cheered enthusiastically 'Try hard, try hard, our runners', attendees in crowds also whistled, cheered, and roared to inspire one another throughout the race"*. In this instance, the organizers brought a large number of strangers together in an entertaining and cheerful environment, fostering the development of a common sense of positive attitudes and collective behaviors toward one another. Furthermore, respondents stated that: *"Attendees ran together and yelled 'Keep trying, keep trying'. People running behind me called out 'Keep trying, brother, keep trying, brother', and responded by turning around and shouting 'Try, try, try' [...] The runners themselves uplifted the atmosphere of the event together. As soon as the warm-up began, everyone started shouting and cheering. Strangers came together and cheered each other up"* (ID01), and *"In addition to the volunteer team, many runners ran together during the race. Seeing them shouting and cheering other people up, I also wanted to inspire and spread a positive vibe to other runners"* (ID06). Together, attendees indeed elevated the positive social atmosphere in temporary communities of the events via the **inspiring** activity, which was driven by service staff (e.g. the MC and volunteers) and crowds of attendees, a servicescape's social aspects as platforms arranged by service providers. Such an activity makes individuals be more likely to engage in acts of kindness and support, like cheering on other runners, which demonstrates a type of citizenship behavior.

Linking the running event to a special themed participation did draw large numbers of runners together, as seen during MovementRun: *"Runners put on white T-shirts with a 'two hands lifting the heart' image on the left side of the chest to call for action to help children in need of cardiac surgery"*. Participants in this event collectively attracted attention from the public by adhering to certain rules and norms to demonstrate their affinity with the temporary community of the event (e.g. wearing the event uniform in accordance with the organizer's theme). As a further observation on the Fan-page of InterRun, there was an announcement posted by the organizers of a costume run which actively sought attendees' input and creativity in designing their own costumes: *"We would like to thank you for your participation and support for our Time To Express cosplay competition. Here are the Top 5 with the most votes [...] The prizes including shoe vouchers and gift packages will be delivered to your house. Kindly send your shipping address in a direct message"*. In this instance, runners creatively displayed symbolic objects or specific actions that spread messages about particular issues, as noted by ID11: *"I really enjoyed the cosplay contest, where participants wore themed clothing to raise*

awareness or support a cause. For example, one of my friends and the other runners in the team printed a message on their skirts, urging support for baby girls. With that gear, they completed the 42-kilometer race [...] People would also wear pink T-shirts as part of their cosplay attire to raise awareness of a specific cause, such as breast cancer" Generally, platforms such as a unique themed running program and a special proposal for a costume run helped to engage crowds of attendees in carrying out the **publicizing** activity, which raises public awareness of social issues (e.g. children's healthcare or cancer). Such activity could significantly influence runners' perception of the event's image in a positive way: *"I really admire the runners who picked up trash while running. They ran together, holding trash bags and collecting litter. To me, that's one of the most meaningful activities I've seen at a running event"* (ID01).

4.5.3 Fulfillment of the experience (post-event)

Interactions among runners at the event will encourage them to seek out and expand their interactions and intensify their experiences with each other after the event. Particularly, participants engaged in the showing and prolonging activities, in which they continued to enhance their event experiences by sharing proof of attendance, event stories, and by engaging in online discussions about their race results and event photos.

Runners' activities and experience went beyond running and the events. Indeed, runners enjoyed sharing their running stories with other peers. Respondents reported that they may showcase their personal achievements and running activities by posting on social media platforms like Facebook or Strava. The ability to connect with these diverse social networks was deemed especially meaningful. For instance, by sharing their training routines, achievements and activity data (e.g., route, speed, and time) or displaying a collection of Bibs, medals, photos, and personal records from various races, ID01 noticed *"gaining more followers on social platforms"*, and ID06 indicated *"receiving congratulations and praises of other peers"*. Another respondent also spoke about her post-event online sharing: *"I posted about marathons or running events I went on my personal social media page to encourage people to exercise more [...] I kept sharing because, well, I was proud that I had taken part and met this goal or set that record. I generally wanted everyone to see that these were enjoyable for this reason and be inspired to join these events with me [...] Following the events, people usually showed off personal accomplishments or photos provided by organizers from events"* (ID11). The examples illustrate that runners viewed themselves as role models, and they might earn the admiration of their peers or build their performance-based reputations by showcasing their pursuit of running goals or the items they collected from the events. In this instance, the C2C value co-creation activity was **showing** activity, which reinforces runners' social status and is facilitated by the presence of service

providers offering supplementary resources (e.g. medals or official results). Positive outcomes for providers, in this case, could take the forms of positive word-of-mouth about the event and re-patronage intention.

Respondents revealed that, following the event, crowds of runners might actively participate in the expanding activities on social media. As one example, ID09 reported: *“Everyone looked for their photos after the race. Many photos were shared by the organizers. People browsed the organizers' fan pages and they might use special tools to identify which of the many photos they appeared in. They could also post some unique photos taken by the organizers (such as the ones with the cosplay characters spotted during the race) on the running community's page. Those photos were quite interesting. Everyone also made a lot of funny comments for such posts”*. Furthermore, observations on the Page of running-community 01 showed discussions among participants about memorable moments recorded during the event: *“It's Monday, and I have a quick question for you today: How do you feel about this photo? Participant 1: This lady ran beside me for about half of the course before slowing down when we ran uphill, possibly to wait for you, brother (a laughing icon). Participant 2: She is so bright. Participant 3: This photo is excellent”*. Another post says *“Travel a long distance to attend the event, and only have one photo. How lucky I am! My friends have been on air constantly since yesterday (a crying icon). Participant 1: I had 'only' 45 photos in the race (a laughing icon). Participant 2: Wow, your photo is so clear (a laughing icon). Participant 3: So where are you in this photo, brother? (a laughing icon)”*. Accordingly, participants extend their experience by exchanging racing results and making humorous remarks on photos that the organizers provide. The C2C value co-creation activity here was **prolonging** activity, which enriched a community culture of discussion and was facilitated by the presence of service providers with supplementary resources (e.g. photos). Providers can benefit from such active engagement behaviors in online communities, such as increased loyalty and advocacy.

4.5.4 Sustaining running activities (daily life)

Following the event, the experiences and interactions with other participants could provide the motivation and necessary resources (such as information and social connections) for participants to engage in C2C value co-creation activities in their daily lives to sustain their running activities. This might involve following other runners to improve knowledge and skills, maintaining training groups, or participating in community activities to foster a passion for continued involvement in future events. This was evident in the following, connecting, cultivating, contributing, promoting, and combining activities, which will be discussed next.

Runners also spent time tracking other runners' posts on social media platforms. For example, ID09 said: *"I visited the Facebook page of the running community to view everyone's posts about running activities. Occasionally I leave some comments just for fun"*. ID08 also shared that participants of running community pages typically exchanged knowledge on running-related practices and events, as well as helpful hints, such as how to treat injuries or maintain the right diet, which *"primarily provided followers with useful knowledge for developing their own running activities"*. He further added that individuals often *"kept an eye on specific professionals to obtain valuable insights and have motivation for running"*. Another respondent mentioned that she also followed professional runners on social media, saying: *"I joined pages of running communities to know more about their activities. I learned more from the more experienced runners I followed. For instance, they would demonstrate the proper warm-up exercises before a run for beginners like me"* (ID06). Here, she learned about what might work for her by observing her peers' instructions, which enhanced her running activities and helped her gain new knowledge and skills. These examples illustrate the **following** activity, which contributed to the individual's self-development. By performing these activities, runners may enhance their passion for running, expertise and skills, and are more likely to be inspired to take part in future running events, which is beneficial to event organizers: *"I participate in online running communities, following their posts and tips to improve my running. It's a great motivator for me to train and work towards participating in future races"* (ID06). It should be noticed that this is beyond service providers' involvement or only remotely associated with them.

Furthermore, as seen on the social media pages of running communities, people also want to get in touch with other runners in search of companions for their daily runs. Examples of such posts include *"A newbie hopes to find running buddies in the Gia Dinh Park area to go for runs in the afternoon or evening on weekdays"* (Page of running-community 02) and *"If you are free on Sunday and don't have any events planned, please come to Café Saigon so we can meet up and go for a 10-kilometer run"* (Page of running-community 01). Similarly, a respondent explained how he connected with others who shared his interests in running by posting on the running community's page, stating that he would be visiting Buon Me Thuot shortly and asking if anyone would be interested in going for a quick run. *"I received responses from five unknown people, asking if I would like to join them that day [...] They accompanied me on a 7 km run, showing me around Daklak's stunning sights. They also recommended things for me to do and cuisines to try while I was there"* (ID01). The C2C value co-creation activity here was **connecting** activity, which was beyond service providers' involvement or only remotely associated with service providers (i.e. matters of running). Connecting with other peers helped reinforce individuals' running activities and related experiences that linked to their everyday

lives. Runners also mentioned that they *“connected with others and maintained relationships, and also arranged to participate in future events together”* (ID02).

Respondents also revealed that in-group members jointly developed regular running routines and then shared their running activities on groups’ online discussion platforms. For example, ID06 said that the members of her group *“ran together every morning”* and they *“shared their route and time”* from their training data in tracking apps. ID09 also shared about his groups’ regular get-togethers: *“Members ran together on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, just 5 km for each time [...] Following each run, everyone shared training results on the group’s online channel so that members could see and comment on each other’s results [...] It was crucial that we kept up these training routines in order to compete in official marathons”*. Moreover, the organizers also attempted to engage groups in regular running exercises and share their running experiences on social media platforms, as seen in the following post on the InterRun Fan Page: *“Virtual race for families! This is an entertaining and meaningful opportunity for families to run together and form a healthy routine. Come join us and make wonderful family memories. Spread the message 'Run for a superior Vietnam'”*. Here, a call to participate in related events from the organizer helps running groups sustain their running routines and sharing of running activities more strongly. The C2C value co-creation activity in this case was **cultivating** activity, which formed group rituals and was prompted by the presence of service providers via fostering related events. This activity is beneficial to providers, as it fosters runners’ intention to participate in future events.

Moreover, participants of the running groups frequently shared information, strategies, and tips with other runners to help them in their daily running exercises. Some respondents mentioned: *“People reviewed and shared good running books. They also offer tips on how to choose the right types of shoes”* (ID14), *“Knowledgeable people would share about foods high in nutrients and beneficial for muscles. Others could learn about them and give them a try”* (ID06), and *“People exchanged articles about good diet, exercise techniques, and the special tools to look for photos”* (ID09). It was also evident from an observation on Page of running-community 02 that participants shared their expertise and techniques with the online community: *“I’m going to walk you through five fundamental workouts using a popular item for runners: a pair of sneakers. Shoes can be used as a practical training aid. All you need for this exercise is a mat and a pair of sneakers. The video has instructions, and you can leave a comment about your experiences”*. The **contributing** activity here was beyond service providers’ involvement or only remotely associated with service providers. This kind of activity illustrates how a collective of participants jointly contributes social resources for the running community, which in turn aids in the development of a sustainable community. Further, this activity might enhance runners’ passion, skills and expertise, thereby increasing their intention to participate in future events.

Using social media to spread the word about related events that would bring runners together to foster a sporting spirit via joining community activities or spreading running narratives was observed on the InterRun Fan-page: *"The final slots for Community Run! In less than two weeks, the Culture and Sports Department will host an event called 'Run for Public Health' in the city center. Get ready to engage in an incredibly active weekend with thousands of other runners. Join right now to contribute to the development of a city with happy and healthy lifestyle! The event T-shirts and medals for finishers are waiting for you at the finish line! Kindly sign up as soon as you can to guarantee your tickets. It is an honor for the InterRun to assist with the event's media strategy"*. In this instance, the organizer motivated runners to experience the exciting event with new running routes and encouraged them to work together to make a positive impact on the public. One respondent further mentioned: *"It is good that running events establish a positive trend for society [...] Seeing a lot of runners and even older people who can run faster than us would motivate us to take better care of our bodies and get more exercise [...] In essence, running events have a big influence on the local people, especially the youth"* (ID11). This **promoting** activity was stimulated by the presence of service providers via fostering related events (e.g. Community Run). As people join each other in promoting a positive trend of running, a healthy and active lifestyle could be established. This activity may enhance runners' perception of the organizers' image due to the positive associations, linking the organizers to physical well-being and active lifestyle.

According to respondents, the running communities typically hosted both offline and online collective activities. For instance, ID10 mentioned they regularly organized *"some running get-togethers"*, *"muscle-training sessions"*, and *"running-related workshops"*. ID08 further shared that they occasionally hosted multiple *"online runs"* to raise money to *"support a certain region"* or *"donate to a children's charity"*, indicating *"there are some side events outside the main races"*. In this instance, running community members not only jointly took part in the activities to improve their running skills but also combined running with charitable activities to make a positive impact on society, as one observation on Page of running community 03 showed: *"Welcome to this year's Half Marathon, runners! Get the app and participate in this virtual race to give your steps greater meaning. The program's objective is to turn participants' running accomplishments into a fund supported by the city's social center and running community. This fund will be used to plant 10,000 trees and build community houses in provinces that frequently experience flooding. One hundred lovely gifts are waiting for the top runners. See the registration instructions below"*. The C2C value co-creation activity here involved combining running with charity, as this example shows. This **combining** activity contributed to social welfare, and this activity was stimulated by the presence of service providers in the forms of

sponsorship. Here, community's perception of the organizers' image could be enhanced due to associations of the organizers with charitable events and social welfare.

4.5.5 A customer-dominant framework of value

We frame the eighteen C2C value co-creation activities found in a two-dimensional model (Figure 4.2) to offer a more nuanced view of C2C value co-creation. These two dimensions stem from the interpretation of the qualitative findings in light of the specific context of this research. The data analysis and interpretation revealed various effects of C2C value co-creation activities and the roles that service providers play in such activities. Consequently, we develop a framework with the horizontal axis representing the benefit orientation of C2C value co-creation and the vertical axis representing the scope of involvement in C2C value co-creation.

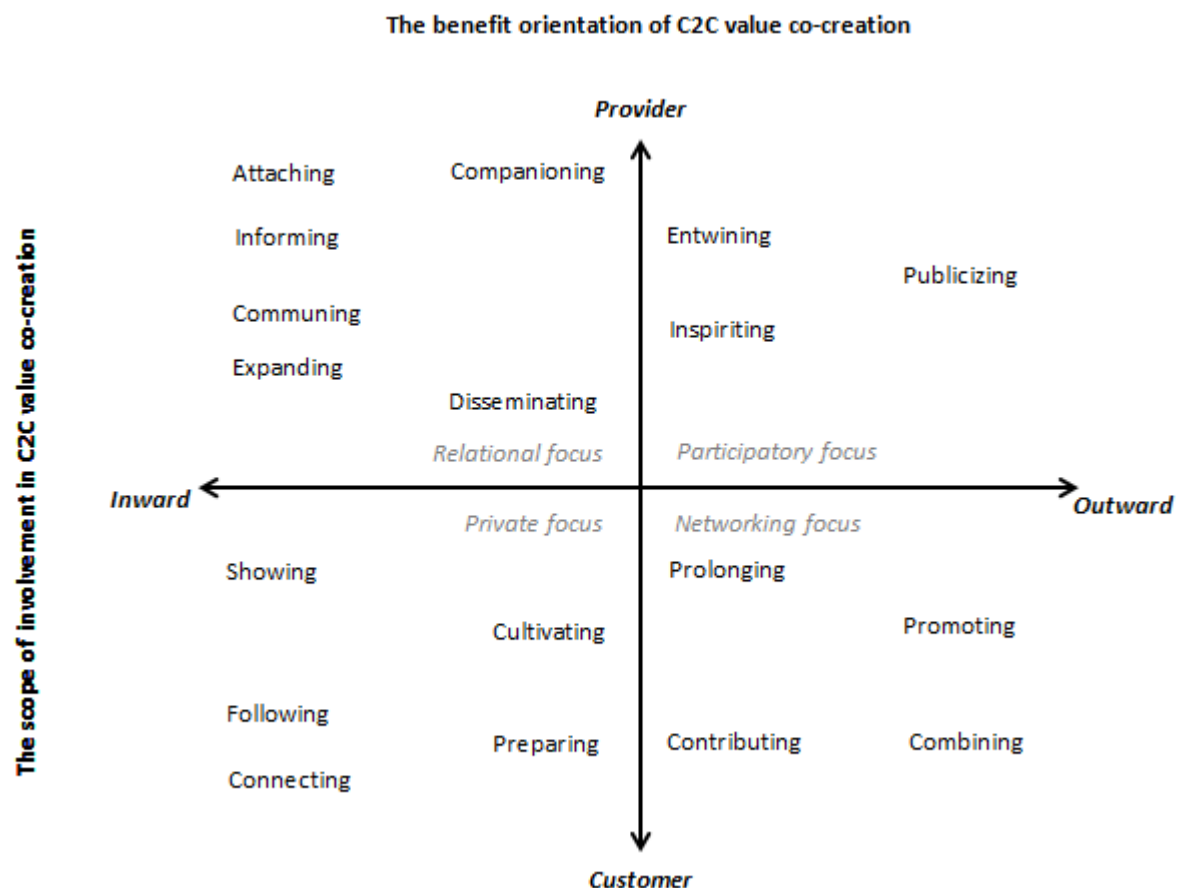


Figure 4.2 A customer-dominant framework of value

The benefit orientation of C2C value co-creation (i.e. the inward-outward horizontal axis) refers to benefits derived from runners' interactions and collective activities with other peers in a particular

social context. In his conceptualization of customer value, Holbrook's (1999) distinguished between two value dimensions: self- versus other-oriented value. Particularly, the author focused on the effects of the personal consumption experience either to the self (i.e. how the customer reacts to consumption or the effect that consumption has on him or her) or to others (i.e. the reaction or effect on other entities via the customer using the product). From this perspective, C2C value co-creation activities can have impacts on several actors and entities. Our research clearly shows that C2C value co-creation activities may result in the own benefits for the participating actors themselves, including individuals and groups, (i.e. inward benefits), or have beneficial effects on external entities like the temporary communities of events, running communities, and local community/society (i.e. outward benefits).

The scope of involvement in C2C value co-creation (i.e. the provider-customer vertical axis) relates to service providers' types of involvement in C2C value co-creation activities, either in the joint sphere (the physical and digital environments operated by service providers) or in the customer sphere (the runners' lifeworld). The C-D logic suggests that the focus has shifted to a more radical customer-centric view, in which service providers could get involved in the customer's multi-contextual value formation rather than the customers being involved in the provider's service activities (Heinonen et al., 2013; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Accordingly, providers play a facilitating role of C2C value co-creation activities. Our findings indicate that providers may get involved in several ways. In particular, they may offer staged platforms where they arrange all details for runners' interactions and collective activities with other peers, and stimulating platforms where runners can create their own experiences with one another. These refer to platform-based involvement in the joint sphere. Alternatively, organizers can offer extra products or services as a form of their physical or abstract presence and relative involvement in runners' lives. These relate to presence-based involvement in the customer sphere.

Figure 4.2 displays the four value formation types based on the two dimensions. First, the relational focus denotes the co-creation of value for the participating actors themselves (individuals and groups) in the joint sphere. Examples include the extended exchanges between attendees at the event's functional areas or companionship between attendees and their in-group members during the races. We refer to this type of value formation as relational focus because here attendees primarily engage in relationships with other peers, or engage in relationships with other in-group members through their group's activities. These may bring benefits such as strengthening individuals' peer relationships and the groups' local ties. This type of value formation takes place in provider-related platforms (e.g. aligning the physical servicescape elements, such as functional design and spatial arrangement, and designing the main programs, such as the running routes).

Second, the participatory focus refers to the co-creation of value in the joint sphere leading to beneficial effects on external entities, such as the temporary communities of events and society. Examples include crowds of attendees joining entertainment activities and bonding together at music parties, and a large number of attendees at the race displaying symbolic objects or specific actions related to particular social issues. We label this type of value formation as the participatory focus since attendees here expand their involvement in communal activities during service encounters to contribute to typical benefits (e.g. the collective connectedness in the temporary communities of the events or public awareness of social issues). This type of value formation is primarily within the control of the service providers. An example of this would be organizing side activities like concerts or putting forward a special proposal like a costume run.

Third, the private focus illustrates the interactive value formation for the participating actors themselves, including individuals and groups, in the customer sphere. Examples include circumstances in which runners spend time tracking social media posts of their peers or keeping up the running routines with other group members. We label this type of value formation as the private focus because it revolves around runners' personal processes involving other peers or group-oriented activities in contexts of their life to form benefits such as individuals' self-development and group rituals. Though this type of value formation typically takes place independently of the providers, additional offerings from the provider may have some influence on this kind of value formation (e.g. encouraging attendance at a related event, like the virtual family race).

Finally, the networking focus represents the interactive value formation in the customer sphere, which results in beneficial effects on external entities, such as running communities and local community. For instance, participants of running communities could engage in post-event online conversations with one another or run together for charity. We label this type of value formation as networking focus since it pertains to running enthusiasts' community participation in contexts of their lives to advance benefits (e.g. a community culture of discussion or social welfare). This type of value formation is generally outside the provider's control domain. However, inputs from the providers may enhance runners' community interaction or their opportunities to interact within the running communities. Such inputs may include supplementary resources like photos, medals, and personal results from running events.

4.5.6 A hierarchy of value

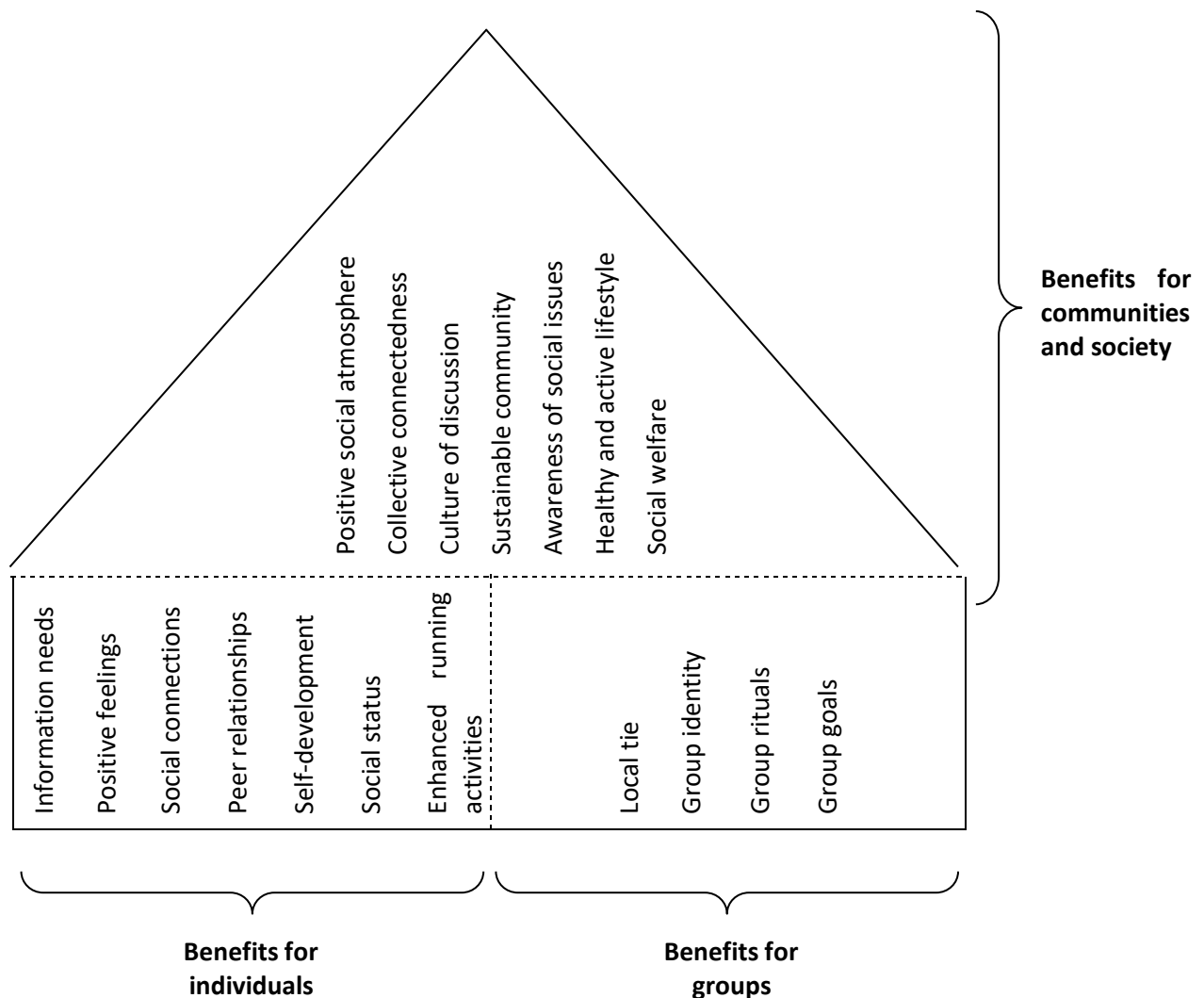


Figure 4.3 A hierarchy of value

As discussed above and shown on Table 4.3, runners engaged in C2C value co-creation activities, leading to various types of benefits. The hierarchy of value in Figure 4.3 illustrates the different levels of benefits. Generally, individual and group benefits are essential and more commonly sought after by participants, as they are presumably the primary reasons for C2C value co-creation activities during and beyond the service encounters (i.e. running events in this case). Once these individual and/or group benefits are achieved, runners may also wish to engage in C2C value co-creation activities that contribute to the broader running community and society. For example, a runner might initially engage in C2C value co-creation activities at the event to gain personal benefits, such as positive feelings from the other runners' encouragement. Once these positive feelings are achieved, he/she

may be more motivated to contribute to the activities at the community level to derive the community benefits. Particularly, runners might want to spread positivity to community of runners, creating a positive social atmosphere at the event, just as they have been encouraged by others. Outside the event, runners may connect with peers to continue running together and maintain their routines. Groups can also arrange and practice together to sustain their group activities. Once these individual and group activities are performed and individual and group benefits are achieved (e.g. enhanced individual running activities and group rituals), runners and groups may be more motivated to spread the running trends and promote a healthy and physically active lifestyle to the community. It should be noted that this hierarchy is not rigid and can vary depending on individual preferences and motivations, and runners may prioritize different levels and types of benefits at different times.

4.6 Discussion and conclusion

4.6.1 Theoretical implications

The study has important theoretical contributions. First, it advances the understanding of C2C value co-creation in customers' own life contexts by identifying 18 C2C value co-creation activities that occur not only in service consumption but also in customers' lifeworld. This broader perspective provides a more nuanced view of how value emerges across multiple spatial and temporal points of reference, including social relationships and connections, and ongoing activities beyond the service encounter. Such new insights are valuable, given that value co-creation research to date has mostly focused on either the service consumption (Pandey and Kumar, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019) or online communication platforms (Heinonen et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023). While some studies have considered a longer timeframe such as how travel experience is co-created from a process perspective (pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip) (Cao et al., 2023), and pre-travel value co-creation (Eletxigerra et al., 2021), they typically emphasize the boundaries of a specific trip or destination rather than the life and reality of customers (Heinonen et al., 2010). Our study extends this research by exploring the temporal and spatial dimensions of value formation within customers' lives, aligning with the idea that "what happens during the service process is only a part of all related and relevant activities and experiences in a customer's life" (Heinonen et al., 2010, p. 534).

Second, the derived customer-dominant framework of value offers a clearer understanding of C2C value co-creation from a C-D logic perspective. Previous studies mostly examined customers' interaction with each other merely as social component in the servicescape (Kim et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2019), with just few notable research empirically exploring C2C value co-creation process to date (Carù and Cova, 2015; Pandey and Kumar, 2021; Rihova et al., 2018). In fact, value formation should

be investigated in a wider context than the isolated customers' experience (Heinonen et al., 2010), as it relates to the relationships customers have with others in their lives and social ecosystems. Utilization of a C-D lens as a theoretical root for broadening the scope of C2C interaction research (Heinonen and Nicholls, 2022; Nguyen and Menezes, 2021) helps us examine how interactive value co-creation among customers took place and the complex and multifaceted nature of value formation by zooming into their own social contexts. This framework not only helps advancing the understanding of value formation from a C-D logic view but also assists service researchers in formulating future studies on C2C value co-creation.

Third, our study expands the social scope of C2C value co-creation research by examining the benefits for customer groups, communities, and society, in addition to individual customers. This addresses the need for more research on the wider impact of C2C value co-creation on customer collectives and society (Heinonen et al., 2018; Nguyen and Menezes, 2021). While existing research has increasingly focused on the collective/inter-subjective aspect of value, such as interactions with others (families, friends, coworkers, service providers, and strangers) within a customer's social network (Fan et al., 2020; Lipkin and Heinonen, 2022), or exchanges between online community members (Heinonen et al., 2019), these studies often remain limited to a specific customer's experience or his/her relationships with some people. Further, the specific benefits that collectives and society might receive have not been explored (Uhrich et al., 2024). Responding to that gap, this research demonstrates how customers actively engage in joint activities that generate benefits beyond just personal gains. Benefits for collectives might include strengthening groups' identity and local ties, as well as fostering social atmosphere and collective connectedness for the temporary communities of an event. Moreover, C2C value co-creation activities might also contribute to broader societal benefits such as promoting a healthy and physically active lifestyle and enhancing social welfare. Such findings enrich the understanding of the communal value unit (e.g. collectives and society) within the C-D logic literature (Heinonen et al., 2018).

Finally, the study specifies the different types of the provider's involvement (e.g. platform-based and presence-based involvement). This helps to clarify the roles that the provider plays in relation to the C-D logic perspective, which has not been explicitly addressed in the literature (Furrer et al., 2024; Heinonen et al., 2018). Such findings lay a foundation to propose a strategic framework, which will be presented next.

4.6.2 Managerial implications

The study was conducted in the context of running events, which are on the rise to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity in promoting health and social well-being. However,

we believe it has important implications for a broader range of community-based events and activities, such as sports, leisure and volunteer events, as well as other socially dense consumption contexts, such as tourism and festivals. Providers of such mass services need to recognize the central and active roles of customers and understand how to get involved in the C2C value co-creation activities (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015).

Our study suggests that it is essential for providers to comprehend the four value formation types and accommodate customers' expectations accordingly. In addition to monitoring and effectively facilitating C2C value co-creation activities in service encounters, providers need to engage in customers' interactions in their lifeworld. This will help them build lasting relationships with customers and customer communities (e.g. running communities in this case), which will increase customer commitment to running activities and frequent attendance at marathon events. The strategies corresponding to the derived framework (Figure 4.4) can be used as a guideline for providers to develop and implement specific strategic actions. The strategic framework has four quadrants. Service organizations should consider which quadrants align with their business to choose which strategies to adopt. Generally, service providers should adopt a holistic approach, taking into account both hard and soft service elements (such as aligning physical and social environments or designing service programs), optimizing the use of technology, and expanding external integrations.

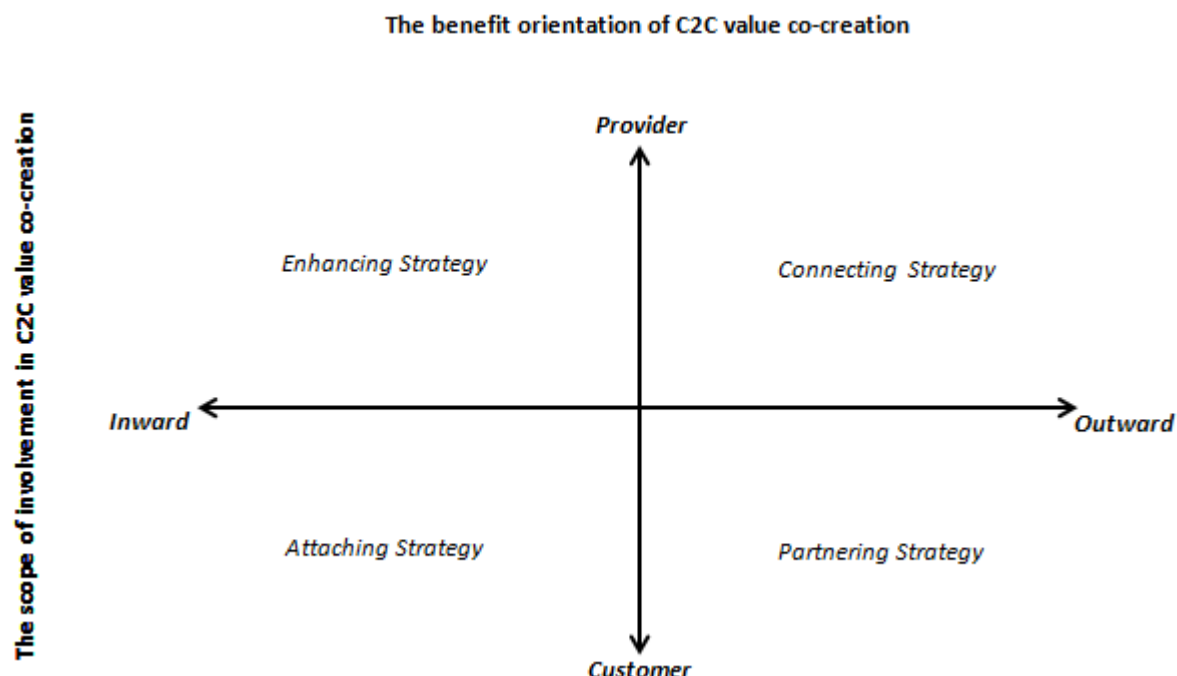


Figure 4.4 A strategic framework

First, the enhancing strategy aims to strengthen the individual's engagement in relationships with other attendees or group members via their group activities during service processes. Providers can

encourage positive and appropriate behaviors that might influence attendees' perceptions in indirectly interactive situations by clearly communicating codes of behavior and regulations on organizers' online channels. Moreover, creating fan pages with features like Q&A and daily running practices, and rewarding active participants can further foster C2C value co-creation activities. Technology platforms and social media can bring more opportunities for brief talks among attendees, which generates a sense of neighborliness in a friendly and harmonious environment. Such initial contact may further facilitate socialization between attendees at events. Along with creating functional areas, such as rest zones and recovering hubs, where attendees can meet and share experiences, providers can bring alike strangers together via the "speed-dating" activity or offering special T-shirts or bibs to repeat attendees who register again, which will reinforce their perceived similarity. Moreover, together with providing and supporting family- and group-oriented activities, providers can foster them by giving prizes to top performing groups, disseminating information about outstanding groups via social media posts like images or videos, or calling out the names of participating groups during events. All of these actions help to strengthen ties and foster cooperation among in-group members.

Second, the connecting strategy aims to create an environment where attendees can step away from their everyday lives and participate in the event without social boundaries and differences. This brings attendees with shared interests together and stimulate their extensive participation in communal activities in service encounters. Besides organizing a variety of auxiliary activities that draw large crowds of attendees (such as concerts and lucky draws), it is essential to focus on creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere with visually appealing elements like welcome gates, sound, lighting, and festive symbols that lift attendees out of everyday social rules so they can feel a sense of unity and immerse themselves with one another. Moreover, organizers can implement dress codes, like event uniforms, to foster a sense of similarity among attendees. Organizers can also incorporate specific activities within the event that promote collective involvement, such as cultural, social, and philanthropic endeavors.

Third, the attaching strategy highlights the practical actions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the lives and practices of customers and subsequently promote runners' personal processes involving other peers and group-oriented activities in the context of their lives. Qualitative methods, such as narrative interviews, life stories, and covert observations, can be used to segment and target customers based on various types of customer ecosystem. Such methods can also be useful to comprehend the contextual preconditions and popular patterns of C2C value co-creation activities. Providers supply customers with items relating to their service processes and provide more online communication spaces, which facilitate customers' sharing of their experiences. Providers might

collaborate with influential individuals or KOLs to enhance the quality and reliability of disseminated content, which will draw in more customers. Providers can facilitate greater customer interactions by offering “Friendzone” feature on their fan page, which makes it easier for customers to find run-mates in their lives. Providing a variety of side events, such as group-based online competitions and games, can affect groups’ running activities in daily life. In order to help groups prepare, providers can provide group-based training sections and offer additional information prior to the commencement of events (such as group-based programs, accommodations, restaurants, and tourist sites).

Finally, the partnering strategy relates to collaborating with running communities and other organizations to advance community participation of the running enthusiasts in their life contexts. This establishes customers’ long-term commitment to both the customer community and the organizations. Particularly, providers can promote exchanges among customers through relevant channels. In addition to offering items associated with consumers' consumption experiences, they can also cooperate with running communities to organize post-event meetings. Providers need to expand the boundaries of the joint domain to create fruitful occasions for customers to co-create value with each other. Other examples include holding workshops to educate customers about running knowledge and skills, and collaborating with other organizations like healthcare providers or sports apparel companies to arrange events where customers can connect and engage with one another. Providers can also take on the role of a dedicated representative working with running communities to promote collective contributions and develop collective activities by providing special offers for active members and running communities participating in events. Providers might work with running communities and other organizations to set up local running sessions to attract more public participation. Also, by sponsoring running communities to hold online events and competition, providers can foster community participation for people with a shared interest, life goals, values and beliefs.

It should be noted that while our study highlights the positive potential of customer-to-customer value co-creation activities, it is important to acknowledge that negative experiences or unintended consequences may arise. For instance, poorly managed online communities could lead to unconstructive debates or misinformation. Thus, effective community management with rules in place is essential to maintain a positive and respectful online community. In some cases, the pursuit of individuals’ or groups’ enjoyment during the event may deviate from the intended purpose of the event or unintentionally harm the experience of others, such as excessive drinking or disruptive behavior. To mitigate these risks, it is essential to establish clear guidelines and expectations for participants. Further, while “Friendzone” feature could provide opportunities for users to find running partners and share experiences, precautions must be taken to prevent fraud and negative

interactions. Particularly, there should be mechanisms to verify users' information to establish a safe and trustworthy environment. These examples, whole not exhaustive, illustrate that it is important for providers, or event organizers, to recognize that a variety of factors can influence the success or failure of co-creation initiatives. A thorough risk assessment and mitigation plan is essential to ensure the success of any co-creation initiative.

4.6.3 Limitations and future research

While this study offers meaningful insights, it has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, the current study examines only C2C value co-creation. However, scholars suggest that the value from C2C interactions may diminish (Plé and Cáceres, 2010). Future studies may look at how both positive and negative value outcomes are derived from C2C interactions. While marathon events may offer a unique context for positive customer-to-customer (C2C) co-creation, it is important to acknowledge that negative outcomes can still arise (Baker and Kim, 2018; Kim and Yi, 2021), even in seemingly ideal settings. Future research may also explore how interactive activities among customers might result in value co-destruction. Such insights are important to understand the complexities of customer-to-customer value co-creation, enabling providers to take a balanced approach that considers both the positive and negative aspects of C2C value co-creation activities and take proactive actions to detect and prevent possible negative effects. Second, it investigates the interactive value formation primarily from the customers' view of their lifeworld and experiences. Further studies might be conducted to understand the provider's perspective in facilitating C2C value co-creation activities.

Third, further research should prioritize expanding knowledge of the derived customer-dominant framework of value. For example, further research is needed to understand the ways in which providers offer support during service encounters, through technology or staff members. How technological trends (e.g. mobile apps, chatbots with human-like characteristics) can be used to facilitate value co-creation of the focal customer, and how frontline employees support interactions between Customers A and B through triadic interactions? Our results also highlighted the importance of group participation (e.g., family, friends, co-workers) in this area; consequently, figuring out the ideal group size for co-creation during service consumptions is essential. Additionally, more research is needed to determine whether these groups differ from one another so that appropriate support can be given. Further, as we have demonstrated the important role of community participation, it is worthwhile to gain insights into the various individual factors (goals, motivations, and personality traits of customers) and contextual factors (festival atmosphere) that influence people to immerse themselves in the temporary community of the events. It is also worthwhile to investigate the

significance of both offline and online factors, as well as how they interact, in the development and maintenance of running communities.

Finally, we also encourage further research to examine other contexts in order to verify whether the derived framework is applicable in other contexts and/or to identify additional significant types of benefits. For example, societal benefits may be more prevalent in the contexts of transformative services like health and education. In addition, other methodological approaches could also be applied. Quantitative approaches such as cluster analysis could be employed to understand the patterns of C2C value co-creation activities and their relative impacts on various types of value. Providers could use these insights to determine which type of C2C value co-creation activities should be the focus of managerial efforts.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The general purpose of the thesis is to delve into the existing literature on C2C interaction, accordingly accentuating the importance of C2C interaction in value formation by investigating C2C value co-creation processes in shared and collective contexts, particularly running events as a sporting and leisure event, so as to enhance the understanding of the multifaceted nature of value co-creation processes through C2C interactions. It also uncovers the derived relevant benefits, service providers' involvement, and how various organizational practices support and facilitate C2C co-creation processes in mass services. The three articles constituting the main body of the thesis addressed several research questions raised by this research project. This last chapter provides a summary and discussion of key findings, highlights theoretical and practical contributions, and mentions limitations as well as suggests directions for further research.

5.1 Summary and discussion of the key findings

C2C interaction research in the existing literature has primarily focused on examining the impacts of incidents and considering interactions among customers merely as a social component in service environments characterized by high levels of customer density; therefore, providers benefit by effectively managing these social encounters (e.g. Furrer et al., 2024; Wei et al., 2022). Preventing negative contacts helps mitigate the unfavorable influences on customers' perceptions of service quality and experience (Gursoy et al., 2017; Wiyata et al., 2024), and facilitating favorable interactions leads to positives in customers' experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Lin et al., 2020; Yadollahi et al., 2024). Hence, customer compatibility management is considered one of the most helpful approaches for encouraging positive C2C interactions while simultaneously discouraging negative ones by attracting homogenous customer segments, communicating clear rules and norms of acceptable behaviors, and rewarding customers for exhibiting compatible behaviors (Nicholls, 2020; Temerak, 2019).

Attentions to C2C incidents and interactions indicate an important research stream in service management due to their contributions to customers' value creation and experiences (Heinonen et al., 2018; Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Also, customers' increased time dedicated to connectivity with other peers in their lifeworld (Zinelabidine et al., 2018), as well as the changes in customers' primary role in their experience and value creation (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2018) have inspired service

providers to focus on supporting and facilitating C2C value co-creation processes instead of merely measuring positive/negative impact from interactions and incidents among customers. Importantly, the service environments provide customers with a temporary platform for initial encounters among strangers, friendship groups, families, organizations, and sub-cultural groups to pursue shared goals and enhance cohesiveness or the emergence of a sense of connectedness and goodwill, which may have implications for customers' long-term relationships beyond the service encounters and result in repeat visitation and customer loyalty (Duffy and Mair, 2021; Rialti et al., 2017). Therefore, they have created momentum for understanding the value formation processes that take place in customers' own social contexts as customers interact with other customers. Accordingly, the thesis consists of three papers that were designed to respond to the following questions:

- RQ1.** a. How has the conceptualization of C2C interaction evolved over time?
b. What are the key themes of C2C interaction research?
- RQ2.** What are the value outcomes for customers and service providers from C2C interaction?
- RQ3.** What are the various types of C2C interaction across a range of services?
- RQ4.** How does C2C value co-creation take place across physical and virtual environments in both service processes and customers' daily lives?
- RQ5.** a. What types of C2C value co-creation practices do customers carry out pre-, during, and post-service encounters and in their lifeworld?
b. What are the various domains of C2C value co-creation practices occurring inside and outside the scope of providers' visibility and direct influential possibility?
- RQ6.** a. What relevant benefits are derived from C2C value co-creation involving multiple episodes within customers' own life contexts and during service consumption?
b. How are service providers involved in C2C value co-creation inside and outside service processes?
- RQ7.** What are practical actions and strategies that could be implemented to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation?

This research project starts off by conducting a systematic literature review of C2C interaction research in Paper 1. It brings valuable insights into the conceptual evolution of C2C interaction over time (RQ1a), the key research topics in this area (RQ1b), the value outcomes for service providers and customers generated from C2C interactions (RQ2), and an extensive classification of C2C interactions across a range of services (RQ3). This paper analyzes 145 conceptual and empirical articles directly relevant to C2C interaction, published in a thirty-year period since the seminal paper conducted by Martin and Pranter in 1989. The conceptualization of C2C interaction commenced with the notion of other customers considered as a merely social element of the servicescape that may impact the focal

customer's experience in the shared service environment, through a broad variety of verbal or non-verbal behaviors and resources customers contribute that may influence service experience of each other during the service process, and ultimately evolved to view customers as value co-creator with other customers in the joint sphere or customer's sphere before, during and after service encounters. Accordingly, it shows a shift of the conceptual insights into C2C interaction, in order to stress theoretical and strategic implications and opportunities for service providers to investigate how to support and facilitate customers' experience and value creation stemming from C2C value co-creation processes, rather than only focusing on satisfying customers by mitigating incidents in negative interactions among customers.

As illustrated in Paper 1, there are eight topic domains of the C2C interaction research stream, including (1) concept, theory and framework development; (2) managerial and strategic issues of C2C interaction; (3) psychological aspects of C2C interaction; (4) cultural and social aspects of C2C interaction; (5) service failure and recovery related to C2C interaction; (6) influence of customer co-presence; (7) C2C co-creation (dyadic or collective); and (8) triadic customer interaction. A variety of issues examined in C2C interaction research demonstrates the importance of inter-customer interactions during service encounters, yet only a handful of studies directly investigated C2C value co-creation inside service settings (e.g. Bianchi, 2019; Reichenberger, 2017). Thus, the research area clearly needs more attention.

Besides, this paper proposes a classification of positive and negative value outcomes for providers and customers. While customers experience emotional values (satisfaction, fun, enjoyment, and excitement), social values (achievement of status, self-image, social affirmation, and respect), functional values (improving social skills, broadening the horizons of other cultures and viewpoints, receiving credible and valuable advice and information, and reducing risks in purchase decision), and network values (a sense of belonging and connectedness, sustainable collaborations, collaborative learning, and empathetic resonance), some C2C interaction-based positive outcomes are derived for providers, including economic values (valuable human resources, lower price sensitivity, minimized service failure and faster service recovery, and increased productivity), and relationship values (enhanced loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, customer voluntary performance, and brand attachment). In addition to positive outcomes, both customers and providers face negative ones. Customers are likely to experience negative feelings such as annoyance, anger and frustration by other customer service failures or receive poor information and bad advice from other customers. Providers may undergo customers' switch to another provider when customers in close friendship bonds with each other leave or customers' lower satisfaction and lower brand image by misbehaviors among customers. Prior C2C interaction research primarily highlights individual value outcomes, but value co-

creation via C2C interactions leading to benefits for collectives (e.g. groups, communities, or even society at large) is mostly neglected. Hence, C2C value co-creation processes forming benefits at the collective level should be further investigated.

A cross-industry categorization of C2C interaction is also suggested to separate four types of C2C interaction (need-specific, standard-specific, affirmation and sympathy, and social connectedness and relationship building C2C interactions), based on two dimensions (focus of service experience and interaction orientation). While focus of service experience concerns whether the creation of customers' experience is derived from offering-related or process-related C2C interaction, interaction orientation stresses interests and expectations that customers pursue between a functional or experiential intention. Need-specific C2C interactions refer to functional benefits from offering-related interactions and may typically occur at fitness classes and retail stores. Standard-specific C2C interactions delineate inter-customer encounters impacting the functional service process that possibly takes place in restaurants and hotels. Affirmation and sympathy C2C interactions mention approving each other's self-values or providing social and emotional support around the consumption of a particular product or service that are likely to happen in health clubs and conferences. Social connectedness and relationship building C2C interactions reflect strengthening bonds and social identity in the shared consumption process at sports events and during cruise trips. Such a thorough understanding of different manifestations of C2C interaction types across a range of services enables appropriately implementing practical actions.

Together with contributions to insights into C2C interaction research over the last three decades, Paper 1 raises some issues of value co-creation processes through C2C interactions that need to be further investigated in the subsequent stage of this research project. Interactive activities among customers are crucial, not only during but also pre- and post-service encounters and in customers' lifeworld, as these activities may influence customers' service consumption and their own goals. Accordingly, Paper 2 and Paper 3 add to our understanding of C2C value co-creation processes extending over the scope of the core service encounter (RQ4). The qualitative study outlined in Paper 2 is conducted to uncover a range of C2C value co-creation practices that customers undertake inside and outside the service process (RQ5a) and develop an extensive framework distinguishing diverse domains based on explored practices involving multiple episodes within customers' life and social experiences during the core service encounter (RQ5b). Also, Paper 2 offer practical actions to support and facilitate the identified practices (RQ7).

Paper 2 identifies twenty-five categories and fifty-four sub-categories across the three practice levels (individual-, group-, and community-level practices) ranging from pre-, during to post-running events, and in participants' lifeworld revolving around daily running activities. At the individual level,

customers engage in some practices during service consumption; for example, instrumental assistance (informing and helping) or developing relationships (reuniting and expanding). They also conduct resources assembling practices (collecting, hunting, and relating) and reflecting practices (showing and recalling) before and after visiting running events. Furthermore, self-cultivation (following and complying) and linking interest (connecting and exchanging) are practices that customers involve in their life to maintain a passion for running activities. Regarding the group level, members of groups often perform practices such as expressing comradeship (companioning and coordinating) and sharing (catching and resting) at running events. Prior to events, they choreograph and prepare together to direct to the best-customised group experiences among members during running events as housed within planning practices, whilst members also involve in recollecting practices (reporting and reviewing) after running events. Members also engage in keeping practices (challenging and cultivating) and constructing practices (celebrating and supporting) revolving around their daily running lifeworld. C2C value co-creation processes are also witnessed across community-level practices. During running events, customers take part in ephemeral union practices (hoping and gathering) or spreading practices (inspiring and publicizing) within large collectives. Also, customers together join in practices beyond the immediate events, including networking (notifying, co-learning, and entertaining) and engaging (consulting, contributing, and organizing).

In addition, Paper 2 proposes an extensive framework including the four diverse practice-based domains such as blurred area, self-organizing area, open area, and integrated area. The model draws upon (1) the locus of practice and (2) the scope of practice. The former refers to whether C2C value co-creation practices occurring in the joint sphere (the zone visible to the service provider) or the customer sphere (the zone invisible to the service provider), whereas the latter stresses participants engaging in an interactive extent ranging from implicit encounters through in-group and sharing-out interactions among participants to socially immersive activities. The empirically derived framework formulates a clear picture of C2C value co-creation practices in the four different circles.

In an attempt to investigate relevant benefits derived from C2C value co-creation processes taking place in multiple episodes within customers' lifeworld and social experiences during service consumption (RQ6a) as well as service providers' involvement in such value creation processes (RQ6b), Paper 3 develops a customer-dominant framework of value based on two axes, with the horizontal dimension representing the benefit orientation of C2C value co-creation and the vertical dimension representing the scope of involvement in C2C value co-creation. While the former refers to benefits derived from runners' interactions and collective activities with other peers in a particular, the latter relates to service providers' types of involvement in C2C value co-creation activities either in the joint sphere or in the customer sphere. These two dimensions are combined to construct a two-by-two

model with four value formation types (the relational focus, the participatory focus, the private focus, and the networking focus). The relational focus demonstrates the co-creation of value for the participating actors themselves (individuals and groups) in the joint sphere. The participatory focus indicates the co-creation of value in the joint sphere leading to beneficial effects on external entities, including temporary communities of events and society. The private focus shows the interactive value formation for the participating actors themselves, such as individuals and groups, in the customer sphere. The networking focus denotes the interactive value formation in the customer sphere, which leads to beneficial effects on external entities, including running communities and local community. These four different areas reflect how relevant benefits are created and service providers involve in customers' value co-creation processes with their peers. Moreover, this paper constructs a hierarchy of value, which illustrates the different levels of benefits derived from C2C value co-creation activities.

Paper 3 further develops a strategic framework (RQ7), including four strategies (the enhancing strategy, the connecting strategy, the attaching strategy, and the partnering strategy), which can be appropriately adopted by service providers. These strategies can serve as an orientation for developing and deploying specific strategic actions for various organizers. Thus, it is important for organizers to consider which areas of strategies pertain to their business operation so that they may design and implement adequate strategies.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

This research project makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, the findings enrich the understanding of the conceptual advancement of C2C interactions over time. As per the analyses in the systematic literature review phase, the conceptualization of C2C interaction has evolved from recognizing other customers' presences as a merely social element in various service settings that may affect the focal customer's experience to considering customers may co-create value with other customers in the joint sphere or customer's sphere pre-, during and post-service encounters. Generally, conceptualizations adopted in prior studies vary considerably in terms of the nature and range of C2C interactions, their spatial and temporal scope, and the considered value outcomes. This means that researchers construct their conceptual understanding of the studied phenomenon in a variable manner to operationalize the concept. Such valuable insights into the C2C interaction conceptualization are vital to extend and enhance further investigation of this research stream.

Second, this project contributes to offering a categorization of the addressed research themes, providing a clear landscape of C2C interaction studies. A wide range of topics is found, several of which have remained popular over time, while others have emerged only recently. This provides a useful background to capture topic domains with both intensive and sparse research focus from which to

move ahead to what remains to be achieved. The relevance of this finding for academics ties in with the increasing significance of C2C interaction in mass service environments, and is even more crucial to several C2C interaction-rich service contexts (e.g. sporting and leisure events, festivals, and tourism) in which C2C interactions play a key role in customers' experience and value creation. Furthermore, this extends and updates prior selective reviews (e.g. Nicholls, 2010; Nicholls and Gad Mohsen, 2015) by proposing a structured and up-to-date overview of C2C interaction research topics.

Third, extant literature reveals that value outcomes of C2C interaction have been studied in a fragmented way, and most research has focused on different types of value for individual customers while value outcomes for service providers have mostly received little attention (Heinonen et al., 2018). Furthermore, empirical studies have indicated benefits from C2C interactions for customers may not result in the same ones for service providers (Fuschillo & Cova, 2015; Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004). This project brings together a broad variety of value outcomes of C2C interactions, both positive and negative values, allowing us to derive conclusions on how C2C interactions may lead to value creation or destruction for customers and service providers. It also became clear that empirical evidence for some of the value outcomes (benefits for groups, communities, or even society at large) is scarce and additional research that specifically investigates the connection between the collective value outcomes and value creation through C2C interaction is needed.

Next, the investigation of C2C interaction in each particular service has received detailed research attention. However, customers' interactions with other customers may vary between services and limitations of the generalizability of C2C interaction research in the single service industry as well as its contribution to cross-industry learning are inevitable. A conceptually broad classification of C2C interactions across multiple service industries in this project is offered, thus enhancing a structured insight into different forms of C2C interactions and complementing single service industry studies of C2C interaction.

Fifth, this project expands the understanding of value formation through interactions among customers by adopting a broad and integrative perspective on investigating C2C value co-creation, involving multiple spatial and temporal points of reference, not only the traditional touchpoints within service providers' settings or online communities (Helkkula et al., 2012). Here, the empirical investigation offers insights into the C-D logic lens in service research (Anker et al., 2022), which views customers' experiences during service processes and in their daily lives as inherently intertwined (Heinonen et al., 2010). Therefore, this work adds depth to the valuable understanding of how interactive value co-creation among customers takes place in customers' own social contexts, making a significant contribution to research on C2C value co-creation (e.g. Cerdan Chiscano, 2024b; Johnson and Buhalis, 2023; Nguyen and Menezes, 2021; Uhrich et al., 2024).

Sixth, by uncovering a range of specific actions in which C2C value co-creation practices are embodied and the ways in which different social units co-create value in customers' lifeworld and within the service process, this project addresses limitations of theoretically explaining and practically guiding C2C interactive value creation. This project also provides empirical evidence of C2C value co-creation practices, which have not been previously documented (e.g. self-cultivation, keeping). While some other practices have been discussed in the service literature, there are still some differences. For instance, planning relates to members' joint activities to prepare and customize their group experience before the event in this project, whereas this practice has been mainly examined at the individual level in extant literature (Holmqvist et al., 2020). As a result, the study opens up new directions for potential research on C2C value co-creation.

Next, the empirically derived framework synthesizing and characterizing the four various circles of C2C value co-creation practices shows an extensive landscape of the studied phenomenon, including new areas that could be invisible to service providers. Thus, this can aid researchers in interpreting and designing further investigations on C2C value co-creation. Examples may include conducting studies to understand the factors that may contribute to C2C value co-creation in a particular domain, or the relative importance of different C2C value co-creation domains.

Eighth, by developing a customer-dominant framework of value and a hierarchy of value, the study demonstrates benefits derived from C2C value co-creation activities not only for individual customers but also for collectives including customer groups, communities, and society. Specifically, this shows how customers participate in joint activities that bring benefits beyond just personal gains, such as strengthening groups' identity and local ties, fostering social atmosphere and collective connectedness for the temporary communities of an event, or promoting a healthy and physically active lifestyle and enhancing social welfare. Therefore, this addresses the need for more studies on the wider effects of C2C value co-creation on customer collectives and society (Heinonen et al., 2018; Nguyen and Menezes, 2024; Uhrich et al., 2024).

Finally, the C-D logic perspective argues that the focus has shifted to a more radical customer-centric view, wherein service providers may get involved in customers' multi-contextual value formation rather than these customers being involved in providers' service activities (Heinonen et al., 2013). Accordingly, service providers play a facilitating role in C2C value co-creation activities. The customer-dominant framework of value developed in this project provides valuable insights into service providers' roles by specifying several ways that service providers get involved in C2C value co-creation activities. For instance, service providers offer various platforms, including staged platforms where they arrange all details for customers' interactions and collective activities with one another or stimulating platforms where customers may themselves create their own experiences with other

peers. Alternatively, service providers facilitate C2C value co-creation activities in customers' lives based on presence-based involvement by providing extra products or services as a form of service providers' physical or abstract presence and relative involvement. Besides, the framework lays a foundation for future research on C2C value co-creation, along with advancing the understanding of how service providers get involved in value co-creation among customers from the C-D logic view.

5.3 Managerial implications

This research not only advances our theoretical understanding but also offers actionable recommendations for service providers. First, instead of solely focusing on delivering the core service in the shared and collective service contexts, it is important for practitioners to acknowledge that supporting and facilitating the value creation via C2C interactions are vital and do not end when customers leave these service environments. Customers can be viewed as valuable resources with regard to their potential role in improving service experience and adding value to other peers. Thus, C2C interactions in the service settings should be encouraged and the social connectivity among customers beyond service consumption should be sustained in order to allow customers to exchange resources, share experiences, connect interests, and promote responsible behaviors. As discussed in this research project, service providers may get involved in C2C value co-creation processes by observing what customers really do with each other to accomplish their own goals so that service providers may have a better understanding of customers' activities and experiences and then provide practical actions enhancing value outcomes for customers as well as the relevant parties. Examples and detailed explanations of the specific support for C2C value co-creation practices are provided in Paper 2.

In addition, service providers should take a comprehensive view, including the utilization of technology, the external integration activities, and a combination of both hard and soft service elements such as physical environment arrangement, process, program, and people and staff. A strategic framework offered in Paper 3 from this project provides practitioners with managerial guidelines to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation processes. The framework including the four specific strategies (the enhancing strategy, the connecting strategy, the attaching strategy, and the partnering strategy) may bring benefits for service providers in a wide range of community-based events and activities, such as sporting, leisure and volunteer events, as well as other socially dense consumption contexts, such as tourism and festivals. This may serve as an orientation for developing and deploying specific strategies for each type of particular contexts. Therefore, service providers firstly evaluate and consider the need to support and facilitate C2C value co-creation processes, and then analyze which quadrants relate to their business operation in order to design and implement an

adequate strategic arrangement in a range of proposed strategies to lead to the most potential positive effects of C2C value co-creation.

Third, it should be noted that the heterogeneity can lead to negative encounters among customers within the mass service environments as the running events. Moreover, customers always attribute controllable or preventable responsibilities to service providers when being unfavorably influenced by other customers' misbehaviors, which can negatively impact service providers (Huang et al, 2010). Yet, customers' reactions might be less negative when they perceive service providers' efforts to solve these issues (Huang, 2008). Thus, service providers should understand different customer groups' expectations and needs so as to appropriately implement strategies, operations protocols and managerial and training programs. For example, service providers need to equip frontline employees with coping and problem-solving skills to handle issues among customers.

Furthermore, it is imperative to note that as cultural differences may cause variations in C2C value co-creation processes, culture may have a significant influence on the relevance and effectiveness of the proposed strategic actions. Since this research project was conducted in Vietnam, the emphasis of strategic actions is on the collectivist nature with group cohesion as well as harmony among people in their societies. With these unique characteristics in mind, service providers operating in different cultural contexts need to consider how cultural factors may potentially impact the patterns and conditions surrounding C2C value co-creation processes.

Finally, in order to obtain a commitment and success in supporting and facilitating the value creation via C2C interactions in the long term, service providers need to plan for the required resources (e.g. knowledge and skills of employees), as well as change management styles and awareness of importance of C2C interactions in service provisions. Accordingly, service providers should attach C2C interactions as an integral element of service delivery for instilling the business philosophy within the whole organization. Service providers should collect data on issues pertaining to C2C interactions from employees and customers at regular intervals, together with updating qualitative and quantitative metrics to examine C2C interaction activities for service providers' own managerial systems. Such scheduled measurements offer an understanding of the effectiveness of employing the strategies and managerial programs, thus realizing the need for changes and improvements to effectively enhance customers' desires for C2C interactions.

5.4 Research limitations and recommendations for future research directions

While this research offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the following limitations. First, customers can become worse off due to diminishing value from customers' potentially problematic encounters with each other, and such social interactions may have a negative impact on

customers' overall satisfaction and experience evaluation (Gursoy et al., 2017; Plé & Cáceres, 2010). While this project highlights C2C value co-creation processes, the activities and practices that may lead to outcomes in negative terms were not considered. Researchers may therefore investigate how interactive activities among customers result in negative outcomes so that service providers can take proactive actions to detect and prevent possible negative effects. Moreover, future studies could explore how positive and negative outcomes are derived from C2C value co-creation processes that might provide richer insights into this stream of research.

Second, C2C value co-creation processes in this research project are primarily based on the views of customers relating to their lifeworld and ecosystems. However, perspectives from the provider side (e.g. employees and managers) may be recognized as valuable resources in the examination of service (Nicholls & Gad Mohsen, 2019). Thus, insights into issues relating to inter-customer interactions and what existing managerial practices service providers implementing to support and facilitate value co-creation processes among customers could be potentially obtained from service providers' views. Further studies could extend this research project by conducting more in-depth interviews with representatives of service providers such as managers, frontline employees, and volunteers, thus eliciting an inclusive understanding would extend key implications for supporting and facilitating C2C value co-creation processes.

Third, qualitative approaches are used in this project to achieve the proposed research goals. Future research may include the development and validation of an instrument based on C2C value co-creation practices identified in this project. Confirmation quantitative studies may be in the current or related event environments, for example, cultural, entertainment, and music festivals, as well as in a variety of service contexts, such as conferences, cruise trips, and fitness clubs, as these settings may enable a wide range of C2C value co-creation processes. Through approaches such as cluster analyses, researchers could explore which C2C value co-creation practices are most prevalent that should be at the center of managerial actions and examine antecedents as well as different service-related implications including customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Fourth, the empirical limitation of this project lies in the fact that it is conducted within a single service context. Thus, it may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research could utilize the methodologies used in this project to explore different event settings or other mass service contexts. Besides, cultural differences, differences in type and focus of events, event duration and location, and target attendees may all lead to additional or different findings. For example, cultural variations (e.g. individualistic or collectivistic community) may reveal differences in customers' behaviors and perceptions of C2C interaction (Levy, 2010). Moreover, a cross-cultural comparison may be conducted

to help enterprises serve customers from different cultures via appropriately supporting and facilitating C2C value co-creation processes.

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